

ANNUAL REPORT

Ridván 173 B. E.

2016 – 2017



National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India

ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017

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MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF INDIA

Foreword

Dearly loved friends

It gives us enormous joy to present this Annual Report and Financial Account for the year just past. It not only carries forward the achievements of the last Plan but also registers the successes of the first year of the new Plan (2016-2021).

If one looks at today's world the one thing most conspicuous is a terrible lack of trust--lack of trust between peoples, between institutions, within communities and among nation-states. Precisely for this reason the world needs the Bahá'í Faith. For, Bahá'u'lláh rekindles hope and restores the virtue of "trust" among all peoples, in the institutions, in the communities--whether secular or religious, and the society at large throughout the world. Bahá'u'lláh says, "The source of all good is trust in God, submission unto His command, and contentment with His holy will and pleasure." Therefore, in the Bahá'í Community there is complete trust among the friends for all their devoted services to the institutions of the Faith and to one another.

Parents send their children to Children's Classes and Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program, adults come to Devotional Meetings and Study Circles, fully trusting in the goodness it would create for better and happier lives through their contact with the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. This trust again becomes visible in the social action projects and participation in public discourses. People everywhere are eager to know what is so special about the Bahá'í Community and its members representing the diverse cross-section of humanity numbering over six million worldwide.

The Annual Report endeavours to capture the wonderful expression of services and sacrifices and achievements of the Bahá'í Community of India during the past 19 months of the Bahá'í year as manifested in action, reflection, consultation and study of the guidance of the Universal House of Justice, "the last refuge for a tottering civilization." In August we were delighted to consult with Dr. Payman Mohajer, member of the Supreme Body, who was visiting India with his family. The stewardship and resourcefulness of our Continental Counsellors and their Auxiliary Board members as well as periodic visits of members of International Teaching Centre whether for addressing conferences or joint consultations with Counsellors, National Spiritual Assembly, Regional / State Councils or with the agencies at the Cluster level all go to show the collective commitment to openness, transparency and accountability in walking the path of service together. For together we serve, together we demonstrate our new capacities, together we encounter all situations, together we share our successes, together we provide encouragement, together we face the challenges and opposition, together we will transform the world, India including.

The National Assembly held eleven meeting including four joint meetings with the five Continental Counsellors responsible for the Indian Bahá'í Community of which one also included International Counsellor, Mr. Praveen Malik. Two other International Counsellors who visited our country were Mrs. Uransaikhani Baatar Ghianfar and Mrs. Antonella

Demonte during the time of the Conference of Auxiliary Board members held in January 2017 in New Delhi and Chennai respectively.

The trajectory of advancing the process of entry by troops is steadily accelerating and is clearly delineated in advances made at the cluster level marking various intended milestones to portray the society-building power of the Faith to a world utterly disillusioned not knowing where to turn to for guidance and succor.

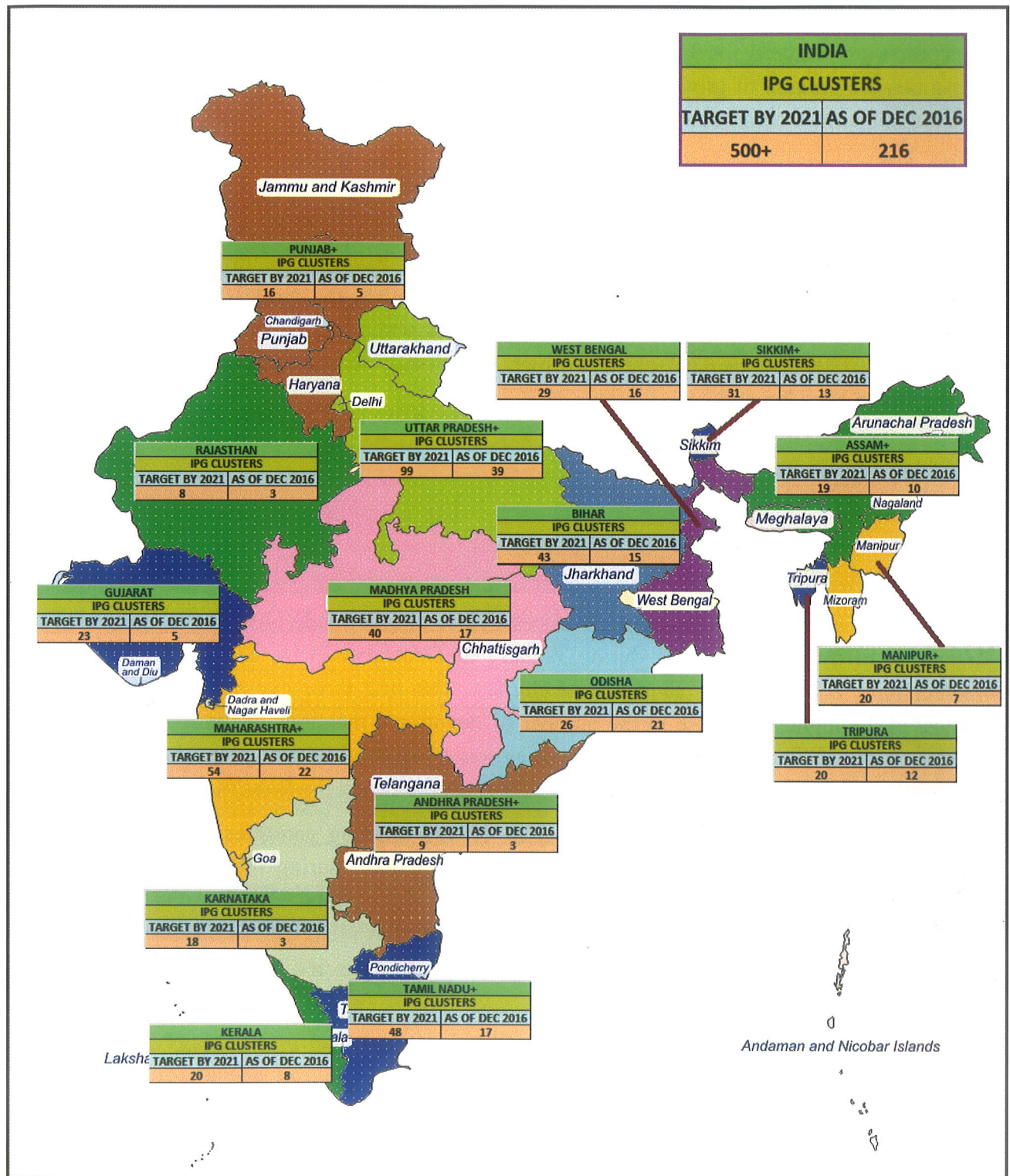
We are proud of the manifold achievements of every dedicated servant of Bahá'u'lláh. Constraint of time and space only permit us to offer a small sampling of the sterling services in this Annual Report. The pages that unfold are the contribution of many individuals and institutions encompassing a wide range of activities in the country. Besides the printed version of the report, an electronic version is available and the links to external pages further elaborate the stellar role played out by the friends for contributing to the betterment of society and the forward march of the Cause of God. May the weeks and months ahead open the doors and provide the means for accelerating the pace of activities leading to successful completion of first six cycles of the Plan and the first of two bicentennial celebrations—Bahá'u'lláh's 200th birth anniversary.

With such conviction and sustained focused attention to all aspects of the current Plan the community of the Most Great Name in India is poised for spectacular victories by Ridván 2018.

--NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'Í S OF INDIA

NATIONAL STATISTICAL OVERVIEW (2016-17)

THE MOVEMENT OF CLUSTERS ALONG A CONTINUUM OF GROWTH (FIGURES UPDATED AS OF DECEMBER 2016)



INTRODUCTION

The Indian Bahá'í community had surpassed the goal of the Five Year Plan ended in Ridván 2016 - to raise to 500 the number of clusters in India that reach the first of the several milestones in the process of growth. Having laid this broad foundation and with heightened confidence, all the three inseparable participants of the Plan - the individual, the institutions and the community entered the last of the series of the four Five Year Plans and continued to strengthen the process of growth in every cluster where it had begun and extending further an enriching pattern of community life.

Of the 500+ clusters that had reached the first milestone by Ridván 2016, 201 clusters were such that the process of human resource development and community building advanced further to enter the second milestone in the process of growth and 41 of these 201 clusters had advanced even further and reached the third milestone. This defined the goal of the Indian Bahá'í community for the current Plan, that is to strengthen the process of human resource development and community building in 300+ clusters while further strengthening the pattern of community life in those 201 clusters which had already reached the second milestone and some of them even beyond.

As per the information available, 15 new clusters have reached the second milestone in the first three cycles of the first year of the new Plan, increasing the total number of such clusters from 201 to 216. This ratio of increase is expected to witness a jump in the forthcoming cycles as individual initiative and collective action in the support of community-building activities intensify rapidly.

Among the friends entered the institute process, close to 5,200 individuals have completed the first book of the Ruhi Institute during January to December 2016, and about 10% of this number have completed the sequence of courses. The first three cycles of the current Plan witnessed the highest increase in the number of devotional meetings in the recent past, while increase in the three educational core activities was nominal. Of these, progress in the activity of sustained study circles continues to be a major concern for all the Bahá'í Councils.

As of December 2016, there were a total of 18,021 ongoing activities in India with over 130,000 participants attending these activities. The increase during the last 12 months was 5,160, which is more than double than the previous year's total increase. Of these 18,021 activities, 11,926 (66%) are devotional meetings, 2,861 (16%) are Bahá'í classes for children, 2,272 (13%) are junior youth groups, and 962 (5%) are study circles.

Efforts to develop human resources and community-building activities are now focused in small neighbourhoods or villages within the clusters. As per information available, the number of such neighborhoods/villages where community-building activities are focused and flourishing, is about 1,500 across India with steadily growing number of neighborhoods supporting more than one hundred core activities.

NATIONAL OVERVIEW (JANUARY – DECEMBER 2016)

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

PERIOD	NUMBER OF RUHI INSTITUTE BOOK GRADUATES						
	BOOK 1	BOOK 2	BOOK 3	BOOK 4	BOOK 5	BOOK 6	BOOK 7
TOTAL AS OF DEC 2016	129,006	40,695	32,181	18,976	12,131	12,446	10,669
(+) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	5,182	1,558	1,861	771	1,319	374	538

ONGOING CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	CORE ACTIVITIES				
	DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	BAHA'I CLASSES FOR CHILDREN	JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS	STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL CORE ACTIVITIES
TOTAL AS OF DEC 2015	7,002	2,741	2,158	960	12,861
TOTAL AS OF DEC 2016	11,926	2,861	2272	962	18021
(+) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	4,924	120	114	2	5,160

ATTENDANCE IN ONGOING CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	ATTENDANCE IN CORE ACTIVITIES				
	ATT. DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	ATT. BAHAI CLASSES FOR CHILDREN	ATT. JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS	ATT. STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL ATT. IN CORE ACTIVITIES
TOTAL AS OF DEC 2015	56,446	26,219	18,281	5,640	106,586
TOTAL AS OF DEC 2016	80,894	27,609	18,845	5,766	133,114
(+) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	24,448	1,390	564	126	26,528

LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
549	577	485	476	470	468

FORMATION OF BAHAI COUNCILS (ASSEMBLY MEMBERS VOTED)

2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
1081	1126	1142	1233	1080	1273

DELEGATE ELECTION (ADULT BELIEVERS TOOK PART)

2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
3454	3973	4162	3891	4084	4041	5891

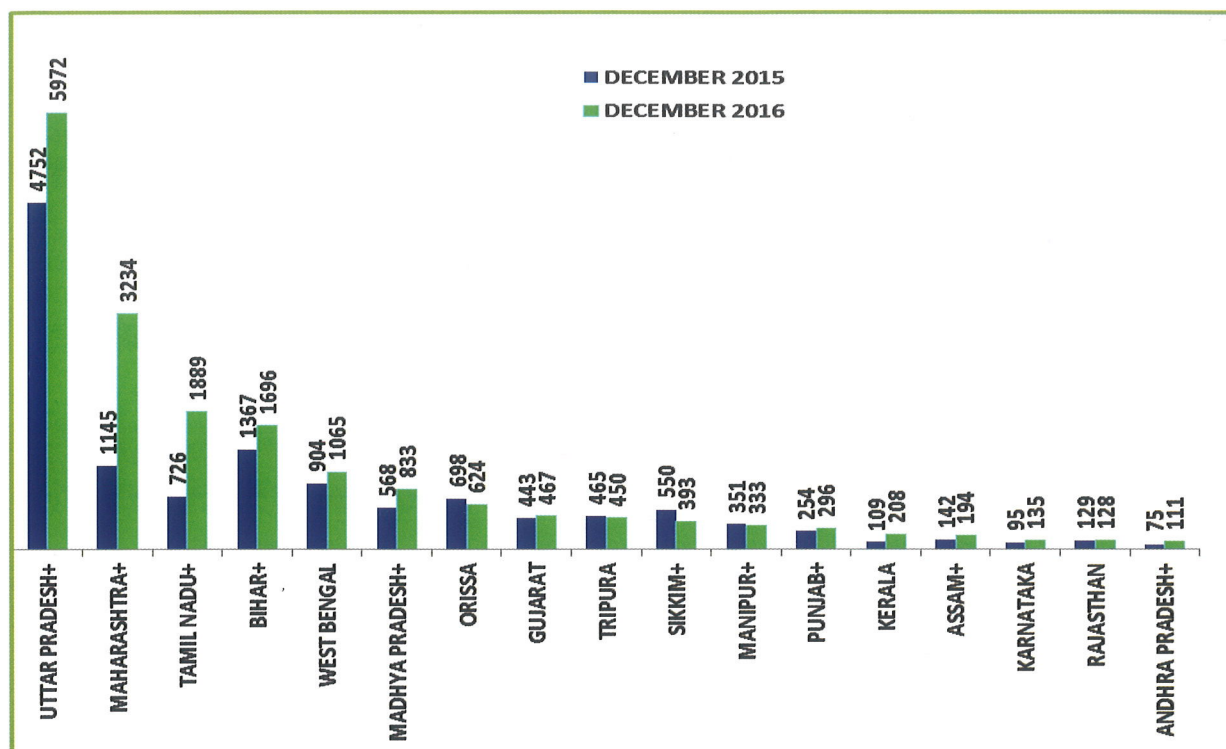
NUMBER OF ONGOING CORE ACTIVITIES

REGION	DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	BAHA'I CHILDREN'S CLASSES	JR. YOUTH GROUPS	STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL CORE ACTIVITIES
ANDHRA PRADESH+	57	28	21	5	111
ASSAM+	115	31	33	15	194
BIHAR+	848	434	294	120	1696
GUJARAT	283	101	59	29	472
KARNATAKA	80	14	14	15	123
KERALA	152	27	9	20	208
MADHYA PRADESH+	587	120	87	39	833
MAHARASHTRA+	2,541	314	248	131	3234
MANIPUR+	258	29	28	18	333
ORISSA	467	80	57	20	624
PUNJAB+	133	73	74	16	296
RAJASTHAN	78	26	20	4	128
SIKKIM+	274	68	40	11	393
TAMIL NADU+	1,536	121	122	110	1889
TRIPURA	322	66	46	16	450
UTTAR PRADESH+	3,780	1,042	885	265	5972
WEST BENGAL	415	287	235	128	1065
TOTAL	11,926	2,861	2272	962	18021

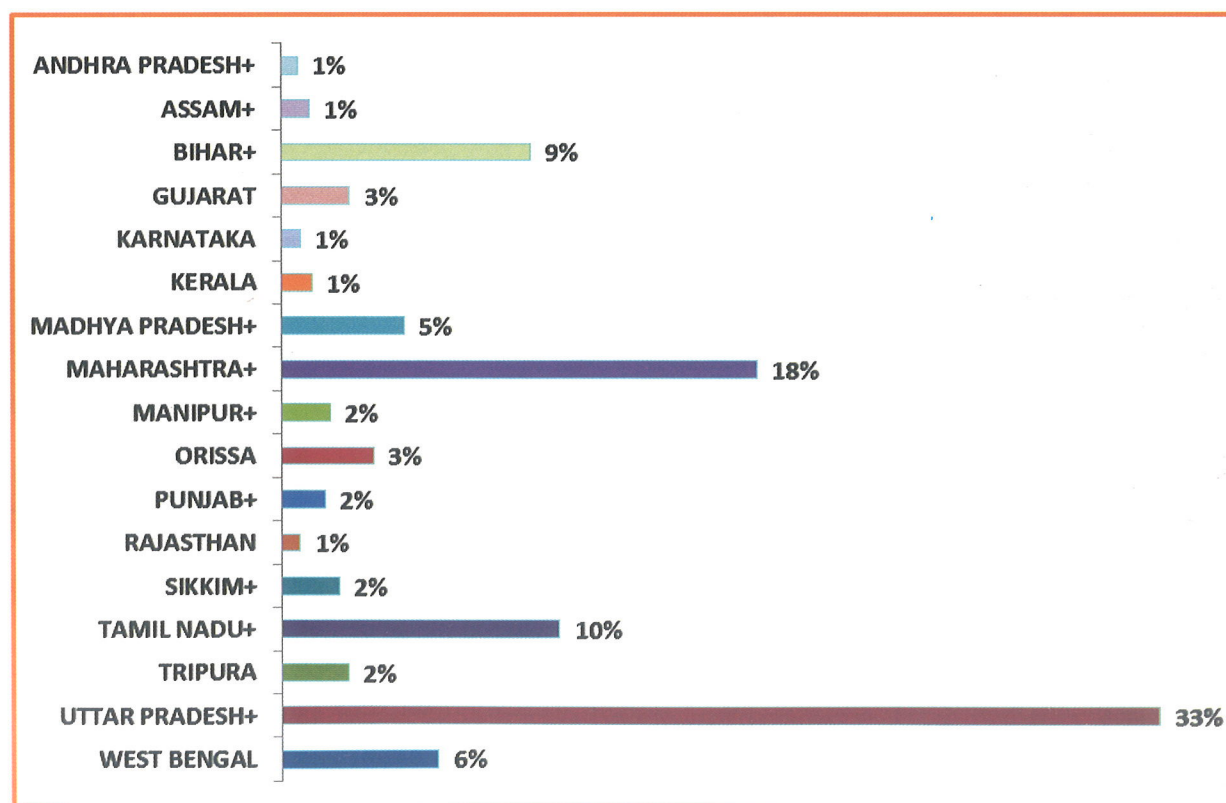
ATTENDANCE IN ONGOING CORE ACTIVITIES

REGION	ATT. DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	ATT. BAHAI CHILDREN'S CLASSES	ATT. JR. YOUTH GROUPS	ATT. STUDY CIRCLES
ANDHRA PRADESH+	377	190	159	29
ASSAM+	682	401	291	95
BIHAR+	8,241	4,330	2,432	782
GUJARAT	1,908	1,176	507	152
KARNATAKA	535	206	106	41
KERALA	565	263	75	96
MADHYA PRADESH+	4,455	1,215	796	223
MAHARASHTRA+	11,504	3,801	2,539	725
MANIPUR+	1,002	240	143	63
ORISSA	2,071	648	406	113
PUNJAB+	1,428	630	889	57
RAJASTHAN	549	269	133	14
SIKKIM+	1,248	718	282	37
TAMIL NADU+	6,860	1,025	878	506
TRIPURA	2,104	579	299	70
UTTAR PRADESH+	34,549	9,155	6,817	1,982
WEST BENGAL	2,816	2,763	2,093	781
TOTAL	80,894	27,609	18,845	5,766

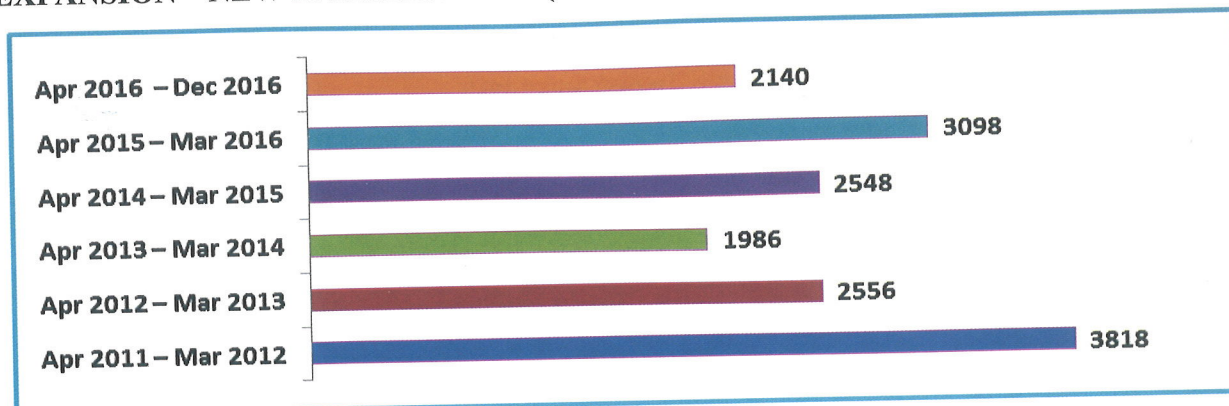
CORE ACTIVITIES – A COMPARISON



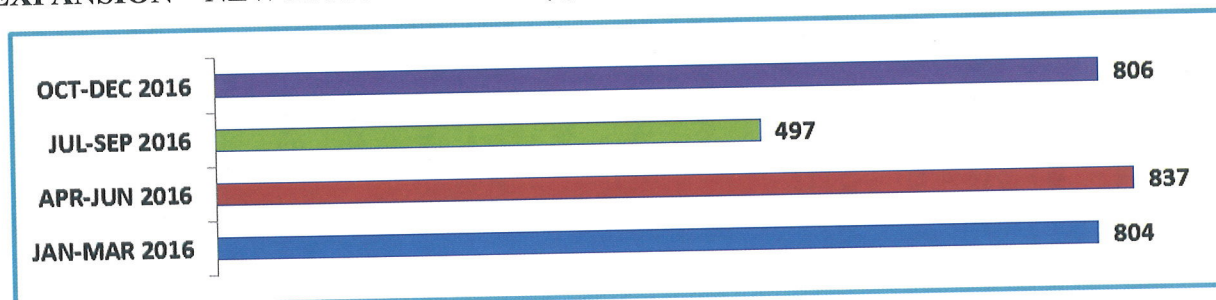
REGIONAL PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL CORE ACTIVITIES



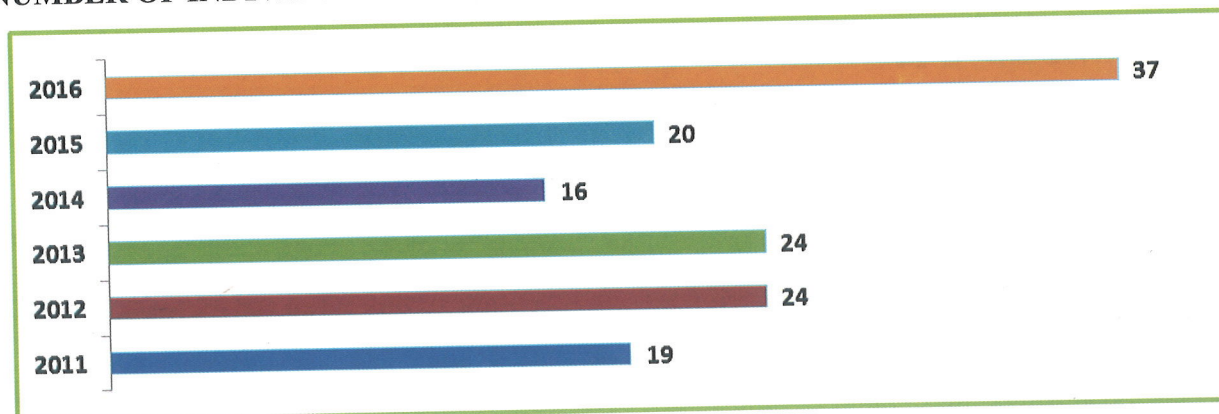
EXPANSION – NEW ENROLLMENTS (YEARLY)



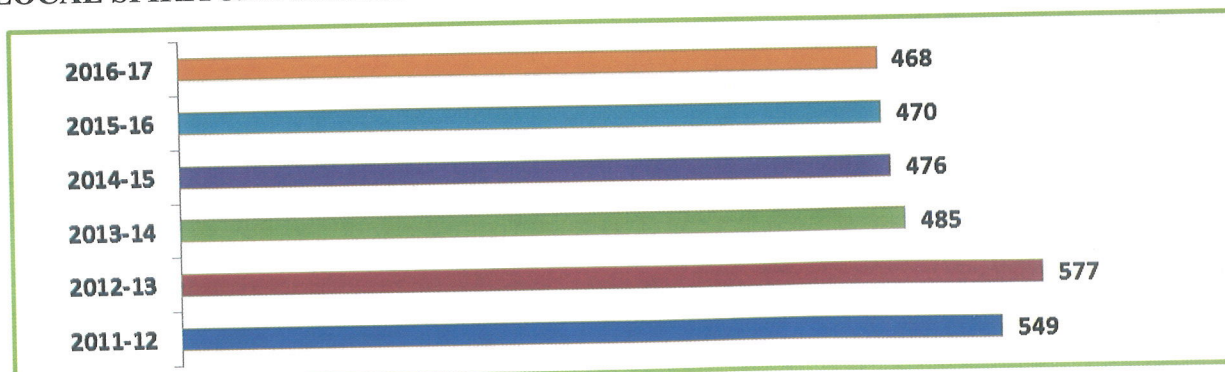
EXPANSION – NEW ENROLLMENTS (QUARTERLY)



NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED AS HOME-FRONT PIONEERS

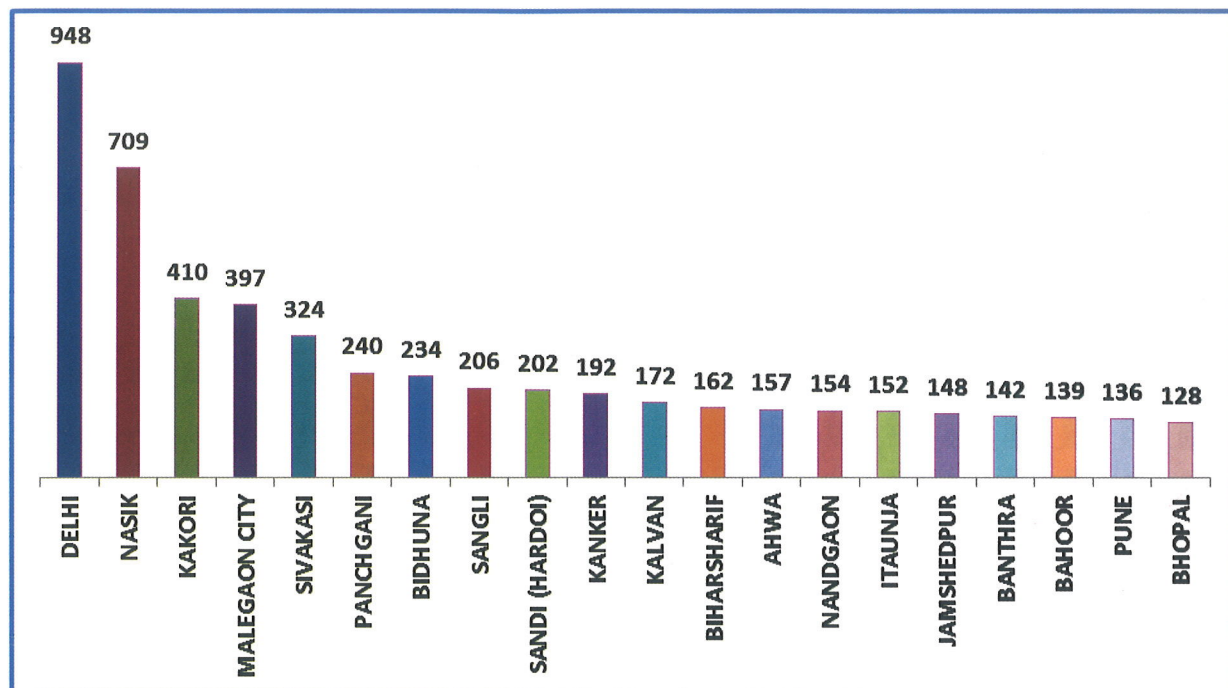


LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

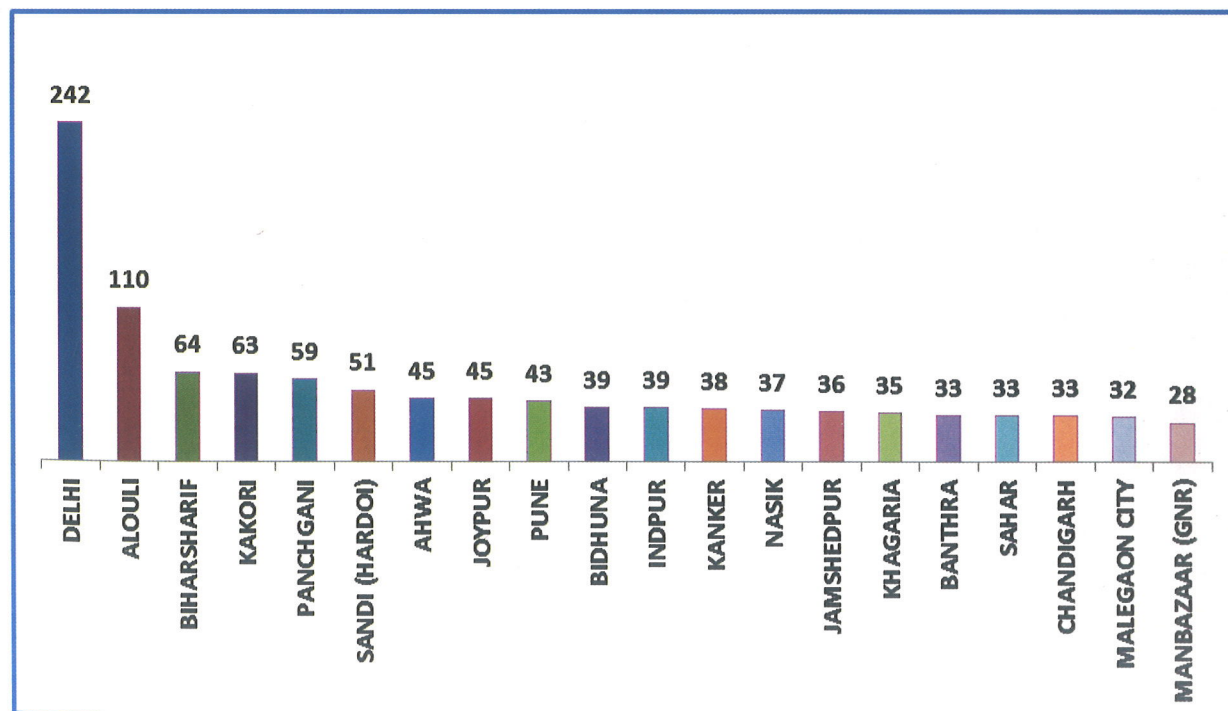


TOP 20 CLUSTERS WITH HIGHEST NUMBER OF CORE ACTIVITIES

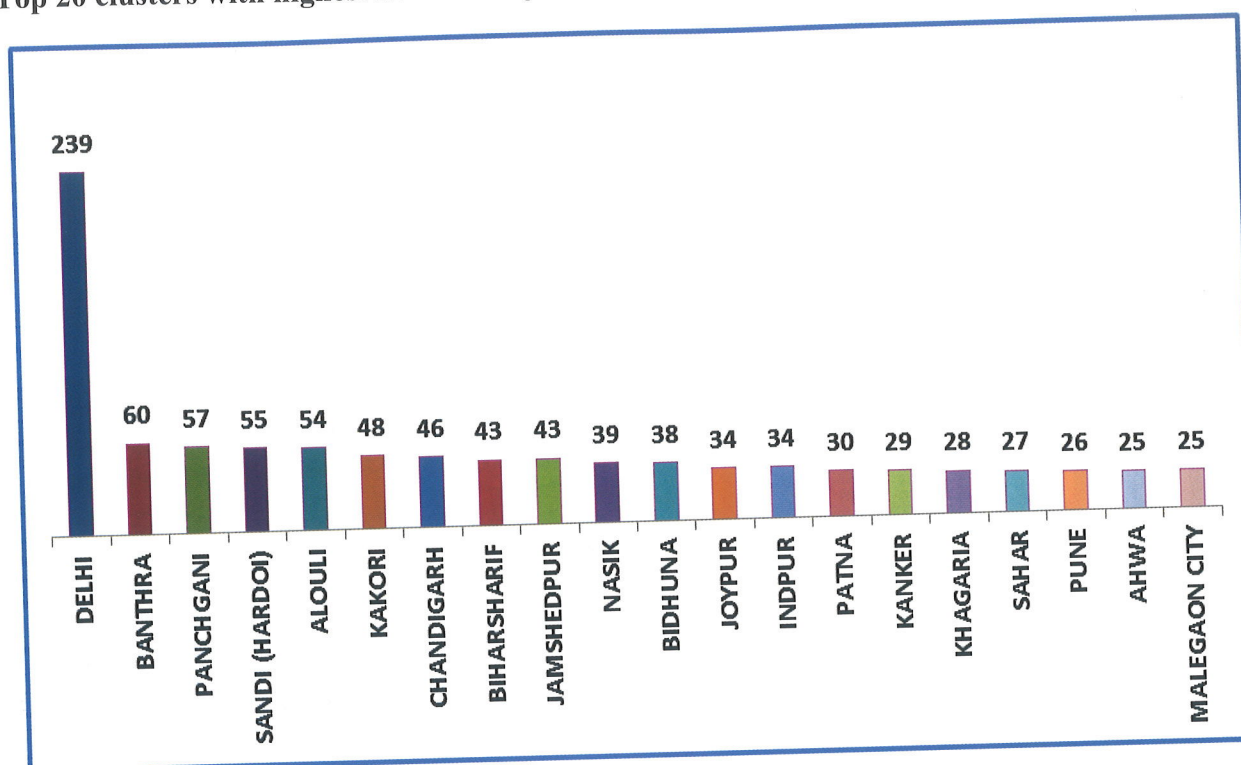
Top 20 clusters with highest number of devotional meetings



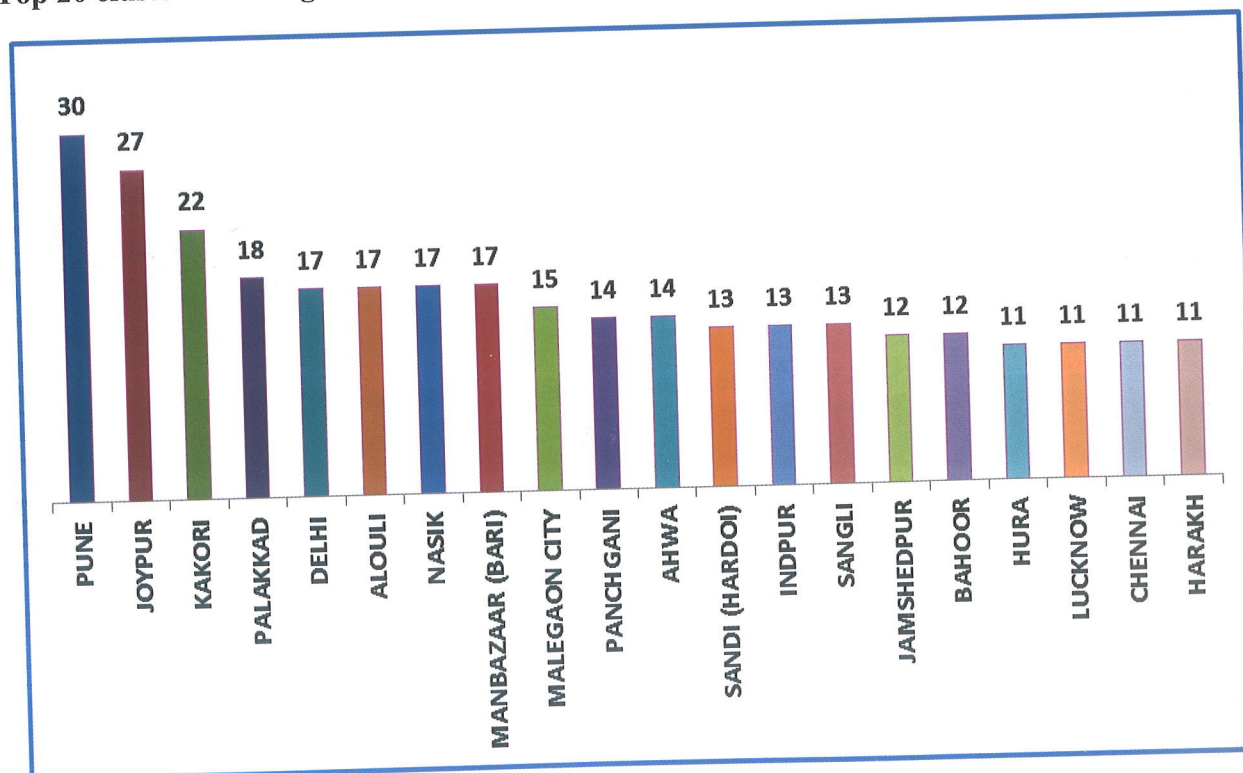
Top 20 clusters with highest number of Baha'i classes for children



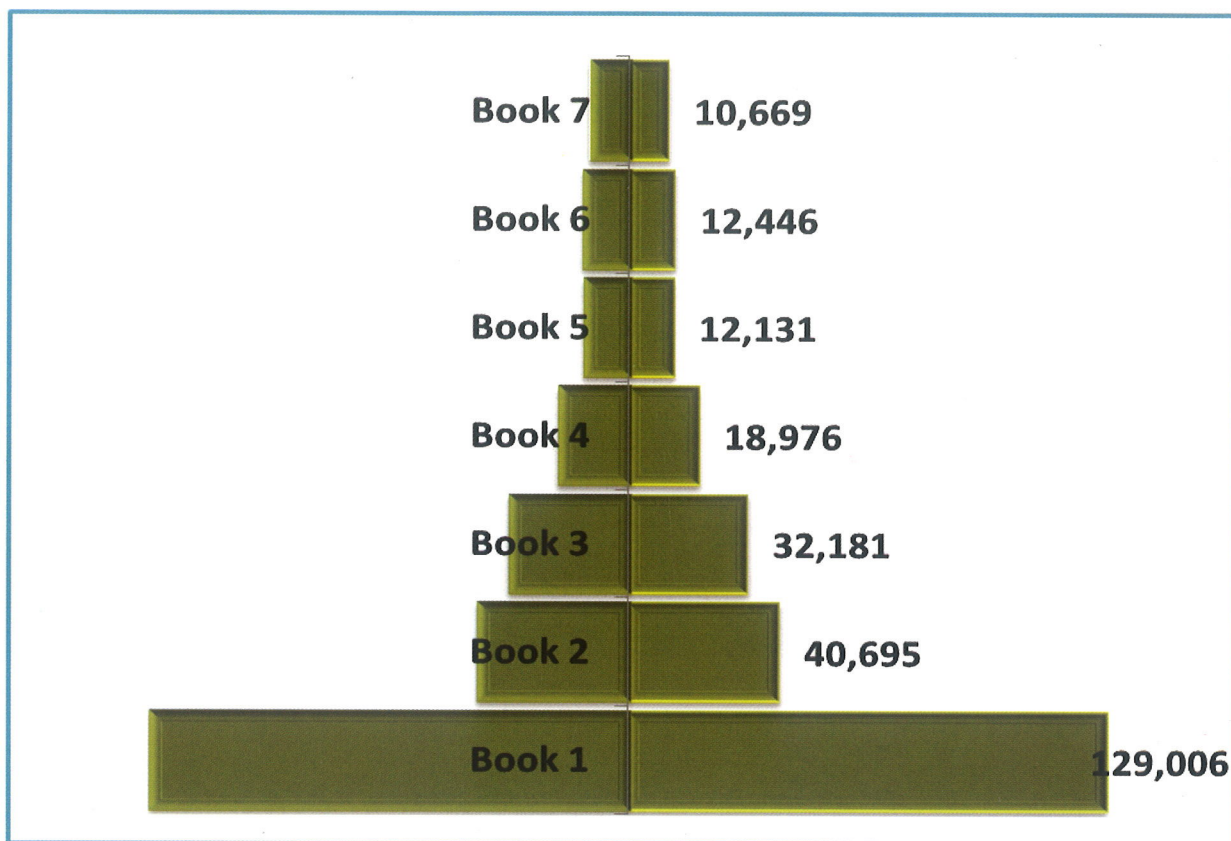
Top 20 clusters with highest number of junior youth groups



Top 20 clusters with highest number of study circles



HUMAN RESOURCE PYRAMID (AS OF DECEMBER 2016)



INSTITUTE GRADUATES & PERCENTAGE OF ACTS OF SERVICE

RUHI BOOK NUMBER	MAR 2012	MAR 2013	MAR 2014	MAR 2015	MAR 2016	DEC 2016
BOOK 1 GRADUATES	104586	108859	113165	117979	123566	129006
DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	4056	4069	4402	5415	7002	11926
BOOK 1 - % OF ACTIVE HUMAN RESOURCES	4%	4%	4%	5%	6%	9%
BOOK 3 GRADUATES	22809	24773	26320	27855	30177	32181
CHILDREN'S CLASSES	1894	2042	2045	2225	2741	2861
BOOK 3 - % OF ACTIVE HUMAN RESOURCES	8%	8%	8%	8%	9%	9%
BOOK 5 GRADUATES	5360	6560	7926	9204	10779	12131
JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS	1298	1459	1696	1984	2158	2272
BOOK 5 - % OF ACTIVE HUMAN RESOURCES	24%	22%	21%	22%	20%	19%
BOOK 7 GRADUATES	8777	9173	9441	9755	10101	10669
STUDY CIRCLES	785	858	855	1087	960	962
BOOK 7 - % OF ACTIVE HUMAN RESOURCES	9%	9%	9%	11%	10%	9%



REGIONAL PROFILE – ANDHRA PRADESH AND TELANGANA

MOVEMENT OF CLUSTERS

GOAL (BY APR 2021)	CURRENT STATUS (DEC 2016)	NEW CLUSTERS
FOR 2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE
12	3	-

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

PERIOD	BOOK 1	BOOK 2	BOOK 3	BOOK 4	BOOK 5	BOOK 6	BOOK 7
TOTAL AS OF DEC 2016	4,488	969	487	311	134	192	168
(+) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	75	0	14	23	0	10	0

CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	NO. OF DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	NO. OF CHILDREN'S CLASSES	NO. OF JR. YOUTH GROUPS	NO. OF STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	28	23	20	4	75
AS OF DEC 2016	57	30	21	6	114
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	29	7	1	2	+39

ATTENDANCE IN CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	ATT. IN DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	ATT. IN CHILDREN'S CLASSES	ATT. IN JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS	ATT. IN STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL ATT. IN ALL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	176	165	104	16	461
AS OF DEC 2016	377	190	159	40	766
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	201	25	55	24	305

BAHÁ'Í ELECTIONS (2016-2017)

FORMATION OF BAHÁ'Í COUNCILS	DELEGATE ELECTION	LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES
TOTAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	TOTAL ADULT BELIEVERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	NUMBER OF ASSEMBLIES ELECTED
21	2016 = 60; 2017 = 131	6

NEW ENROLLMENTS (JAN-DEC 2016)

YOUTH AND ADULTS ENROLLED	CHILD/JR. YOUTH FROM NEWLY ENROLLED FAMILIES	TOTAL NEW ENROLLMENTS
41	0	41



REGIONAL PROFILE – ASSAM, ARUNACHAL PRADESH, MEGHALAYA AND NAGALAND

MOVEMENT OF CLUSTERS

GOAL (BY APR 2021)	CURRENT STATUS (DEC 2016)	NEW CLUSTERS
FOR 2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE
20	10	BARAMA

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

PERIOD	BOOK 1	BOOK 2	BOOK 3	BOOK 4	BOOK 5	BOOK 6	BOOK 7
TOTAL AS OF DEC 2016	4,783	1,582	987	625	357	437	339
(+) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	58	26	40	15	17	0	6

CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	NO. OF DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	NO. OF CHILDREN'S CLASSES	NO. OF JR. YOUTH GROUPS	NO. OF STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	71	29	32	10	142
AS OF DEC 2016	115	31	33	15	194
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	44	2	1	5	+52

ATTENDANCE IN CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	ATT. IN DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	ATT. IN CHILDREN'S CLASSES	ATT. IN JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS	ATT. IN STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL ATT. IN ALL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	214	285	254	56	809
AS OF DEC 2016	682	401	291	95	1,469
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	468	116	37	39	660

BAHÁ'Í ELECTIONS (2016-2017)

FORMATION OF BAHÁ'Í COUNCILS	DELEGATE ELECTION	LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES
TOTAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	TOTAL ADULT BELIEVERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	NUMBER OF ASSEMBLIES ELECTED
25	2016 = 94; 2017 = 126	10

NEW ENROLLMENTS (JAN-DEC 2016)

YOUTH AND ADULTS ENROLLED	CHILD/JR. YOUTH FROM NEWLY DECLARED FAMILIES	TOTAL NEW ENROLLMENTS
51	1	52



REGIONAL PROFILE – BIHAR AND JHARKHAND

MOVEMENT OF CLUSTERS

GOAL (BY APR 2021)	CURRENT STATUS (DEC 2016)	NEW CLUSTERS
FOR 2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE
45	15	HAJIPUR, BAKHRI

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

PERIOD	BOOK 1	BOOK 2	BOOK 3	BOOK 4	BOOK 5	BOOK 6	BOOK 7
TOTAL AS OF DEC 2016	8,842	3,782	3,020	1,898	1,305	998	804
(+) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	528	81	188	51	111	5	61

CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	NO. OF DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	NO. OF CHILDREN'S CLASSES	NO. OF JR. YOUTH GROUPS	NO. OF STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	629	383	246	109	1367
AS OF DEC 2016	848	434	294	120	1696
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	219	51	48	11	+329

ATTENDANCE IN CORE ACTIVITIES

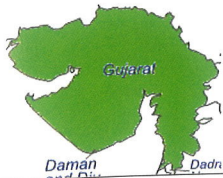
PERIOD	ATT. IN DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	ATT. IN CHILDREN'S CLASSES	ATT. IN JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS	ATT. IN STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL ATT. IN ALL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	6,382	3,845	1,994	685	12,906
AS OF DEC 2016	8,241	4,330	2,432	782	15,785
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	1859	485	438	97	2879

BAHA'Í ELECTIONS (2016-2017)

FORMATION OF BAHÁ'Í COUNCILS	DELEGATE ELECTION	LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES
TOTAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	TOTAL ADULT BELIEVERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	NUMBER OF ASSEMBLIES ELECTED
90	2016 = 596; 2017 = 729	48

NEW ENROLLMENTS (JAN-DEC 2016)

YOUTH AND ADULTS ENROLLED	CHILD/JR. YOUTH FROM NEWLY DECLARED FAMILIES	TOTAL NEW ENROLLMENTS
347	22	369



REGIONAL PROFILE – GUJARAT

MOVEMENT OF CLUSTERS

GOAL (BY APR 2021)	CURRENT STATUS (DEC 2016)	NEW CLUSTERS
FOR 2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE
23	5	-

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

PERIOD	BOOK 1	BOOK 2	BOOK 3	BOOK 4	BOOK 5	BOOK 6	BOOK 7
TOTAL AS OF DEC 2016	4,059	1,133	883	486	286	264	229
(+) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	171	35	41	9	25	18	25

CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	NO. OF DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	NO. OF CHILDREN'S CLASSES	NO. OF JR. YOUTH GROUPS	NO. OF STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	272	85	62	19	438
AS OF DEC 2016	283	101	59	29	472
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	11	16	-3	10	+34

ATTENDANCE IN CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	ATT. IN DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	ATT. IN CHILDREN'S CLASSES	ATT. IN JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS	ATT. IN STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL ATT. IN ALL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	1813	955	671	112	3,551
AS OF DEC 2016	1908	1,176	507	152	3,743
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	95	221	-164	40	+192

BAHA'Í ELECTIONS (2016-2017)

FORMATION OF BAHÁ'Í COUNCILS	DELEGATE ELECTION	LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES
TOTAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	TOTAL ADULT BELIEVERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	NUMBER OF ASSEMBLIES ELECTED
76	2016 = 213; 2017 = 234	26

NEW ENROLLMENTS (JAN-DEC 2016)

YOUTH AND ADULTS ENROLLED	CHILD/JR. YOUTH FROM NEWLY DECLARED FAMILIES	TOTAL NEW ENROLLMENTS
63	0	63



REGIONAL PROFILE – KARNATAKA

MOVEMENT OF CLUSTERS

GOAL (BY APR 2021)	CURRENT STATUS (DEC 2016)	NEW CLUSTERS
FOR 2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE
18	3	-

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

PERIOD	BOOK 1	BOOK 2	BOOK 3	BOOK 4	BOOK 5	BOOK 6	BOOK 7
TOTAL AS OF DEC 2016	4,976	1,009	660	396	233	269	230
(+) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	87	38	59	13	34	22	26

CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	NO. OF DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	NO. OF CHILDREN'S CLASSES	NO. OF JR. YOUTH GROUPS	NO. OF STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	35	26	25	9	95
AS OF DEC 2016	80	14	14	15	123
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	45	-12	-11	6	+28

ATTENDANCE IN CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	ATT. IN DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	ATT. IN CHILDREN'S CLASSES	ATT. IN JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS	ATT. IN STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL ATT. IN ALL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	224	131	160	29	544
AS OF DEC 2016	437	144	214	54	849
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	213	13	54	25	305

BAHÁ'Í ELECTIONS (2016-2017)

FORMATION OF BAHÁ'Í COUNCILS	DELEGATE ELECTION	LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES
TOTAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	TOTAL ADULT BELIEVERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	NUMBER OF ASSEMBLIES ELECTED
42	2016 = 122; 2017 = 187	13

NEW ENROLLMENTS (JAN-DEC 2016)

YOUTH AND ADULTS ENROLLED	CHILD/JR. YOUTH FROM NEWLY DECLARED FAMILIES	TOTAL NEW ENROLLMENTS
5	0	5



REGIONAL PROFILE – KERALA

MOVEMENT OF CLUSTERS

GOAL (BY APR 2021)	CURRENT STATUS (DEC 2016)	NEW CLUSTERS
FOR 2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE
20	8	-

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

PERIOD	BOOK 1	BOOK 2	BOOK 3	BOOK 4	BOOK 5	BOOK 6	BOOK 7
TOTAL AS OF DEC 2016	2,913	797	572	368	264	278	233
(+) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	18	10	5	1	15	1	5

CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	NO. OF DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	NO. OF CHILDREN'S CLASSES	NO. OF JR. YOUTH GROUPS	NO. OF STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	70	21	9	9	109
AS OF DEC 2016	152	27	9	20	208
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	82	6	0	11	+99

ATTENDANCE IN CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	ATT. IN DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	ATT. IN CHILDREN'S CLASSES	ATT. IN JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS	ATT. IN STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL ATT. IN ALL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	518	171	68	40	797
AS OF DEC 2016	565	263	75	96	999
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	47	92	7	56	202

BAHÁ'Í ELECTIONS (2016-2017)

FORMATION OF BAHÁ'Í COUNCILS	DELEGATE ELECTION	LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES
TOTAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	TOTAL ADULT BELIEVERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	NUMBER OF ASSEMBLIES ELECTED
56	2016 = 147; 2017 = 198	45

NEW ENROLLMENTS (JAN-DEC 2016)

YOUTH AND ADULTS ENROLLED	CHILD/JR. YOUTH FROM NEWLY DECLARED FAMILIES	TOTAL NEW ENROLLMENTS
40	0	40



REGIONAL PROFILE – MADHYA PRADESH AND CHHATTISGARH

MOVEMENT OF CLUSTERS

GOAL (BY APR 2021)	CURRENT STATUS (DEC 2016)	NEW CLUSTERS
FOR 2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE
40	17	-

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

PERIOD	BOOK 1	BOOK 2	BOOK 3	BOOK 4	BOOK 5	BOOK 6	BOOK 7
TOTAL AS OF DEC 2016	12,513	4,477	3,698	2,177	962	1,328	1,203
(+) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	252	114	95	58	30	32	81

CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	NO. OF DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	NO. OF CHILDREN'S CLASSES	NO. OF JR. YOUTH GROUPS	NO. OF STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	227	114	171	56	568
AS OF DEC 2016	587	120	87	39	833
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	360	6	-84	-17	+265

ATTENDANCE IN CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	ATT. IN DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	ATT. IN CHILDREN'S CLASSES	ATT. IN JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS	ATT. IN STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL ATT. IN ALL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	2,046	1,216	1,949	345	5,556
AS OF DEC 2016	4,455	1,215	796	223	6,689
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	2409	-1	-1153	-122	1133

BAHÁ'Í ELECTIONS (2016-2017)

FORMATION OF BAHÁ'Í COUNCILS	DELEGATE ELECTION	LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES
TOTAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	TOTAL ADULT BELIEVERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	NUMBER OF ASSEMBLIES ELECTED
167	2016 = 183; 2017 = 214	24

NEW ENROLLMENTS (JAN-DEC 2016)

YOUTH AND ADULTS ENROLLED	CHILD/JR. YOUTH FROM NEWLY DECLARED FAMILIES	TOTAL NEW ENROLLMENTS
214	33	247



REGIONAL PROFILE – MAHARASHTRA AND GOA

MOVEMENT OF CLUSTERS

GOAL (BY APR 2021)	CURRENT STATUS (DEC 2016)	NEW CLUSTERS
FOR 2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE
52	22	-

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

PERIOD	BOOK 1	BOOK 2	BOOK 3	BOOK 4	BOOK 5	BOOK 6	BOOK 7
TOTAL AS OF DEC 2016	10,738	2,332	2,458	1,228	1,394	888	815
(+) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	687	153	335	112	239	50	45

CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	NO. OF DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	NO. OF CHILDREN'S CLASSES	NO. OF JR. YOUTH GROUPS	NO. OF STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	643	225	197	80	1145
AS OF DEC 2016	2,541	314	248	131	3234
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	1898	89	51	51	+2089

ATTENDANCE IN CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	ATT. IN DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	ATT. IN CHILDREN'S CLASSES	ATT. IN JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS	ATT. IN STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL ATT. IN ALL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	3,111	3,072	2,021	456	8,660
AS OF DEC 2016	11,504	3,801	2,539	725	18,569
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	8393	729	518	269	9909

BAHÁ'Í ELECTIONS (2016-2017)

FORMATION OF BAHÁ'Í COUNCILS	DELEGATE ELECTION	LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES
TOTAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	TOTAL ADULT BELIEVERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	NUMBER OF ASSEMBLIES ELECTED
129	2016 = 356; 2017 = 681	29

NEW ENROLLMENTS (JAN-DEC 2016)

YOUTH AND ADULTS ENROLLED	CHILD/JR. YOUTH FROM NEWLY DECLARED FAMILIES	TOTAL NEW ENROLLMENTS
313	165	478



REGIONAL PROFILE – MANIPUR AND MIZORAM

MOVEMENT OF CLUSTERS

GOAL (BY APR 2021)	CURRENT STATUS (DEC 2016)	NEW CLUSTERS
FOR 2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE
20	7	-

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

PERIOD	BOOK 1	BOOK 2	BOOK 3	BOOK 4	BOOK 5	BOOK 6	BOOK 7
TOTAL AS OF DEC 2016	3,960	1,153	936	586	299	479	436
(+) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	111	20	27	5	30	4	5

CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	NO. OF DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	NO. OF CHILDREN'S CLASSES	NO. OF JR. YOUTH GROUPS	NO. OF STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	275	33	36	7	351
AS OF DEC 2016	260	29	27	19	335
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	-15	-4	-9	12	-16

ATTENDANCE IN CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	ATT. IN DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	ATT. IN CHILDREN'S CLASSES	ATT. IN JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS	ATT. IN STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL ATT. IN ALL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	1,007	325	251	29	1,612
AS OF DEC 2016	1,007	240	134	65	1,446
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	0	-85	-117	36	-164

BAHÁ'Í ELECTIONS (2016-2017)

FORMATION OF BAHÁ'Í COUNCILS	DELEGATE ELECTION	LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES
TOTAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	TOTAL ADULT BELIEVERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	NUMBER OF ASSEMBLIES ELECTED
21	2016 = 48; 2017 = 99	8

NEW ENROLLMENTS (JAN-DEC 2016)

YOUTH AND ADULTS ENROLLED	CHILD/JR. YOUTH FROM NEWLY DECLARED FAMILIES	TOTAL NEW ENROLLMENTS
26	0	26



REGIONAL PROFILE – ODISHA

MOVEMENT OF CLUSTERS

GOAL (BY APR 2021)	CURRENT STATUS (DEC 2016)	NEW CLUSTERS
FOR 2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE
29	21	BALIPATNA, BANKI, DHENKANAL, CUTTAK, BALESWAR, SAMBALPUR

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT*

PERIOD	BOOK 1	BOOK 2	BOOK 3	BOOK 4	BOOK 5	BOOK 6	BOOK 7
TOTAL AS OF DEC 2016	8,692	2,662	1,281	1,047	771	625	451
(+) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	259	101	8	35	31	12	10

CORE ACTIVITIES*

PERIOD	NO. OF DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	NO. OF CHILDREN'S CLASSES	NO. OF JR. YOUTH GROUPS	NO. OF STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	448	109	88	53	698
AS OF DEC 2016	467	80	57	20	624
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	19	-29	-31	-33	-74

ATTENDANCE IN CORE ACTIVITIES*

PERIOD	ATT. IN DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	ATT. IN CHILDREN'S CLASSES	ATT. IN JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS	ATT. IN STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL ATT. IN ALL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	2,160	955	654	307	4,076
AS OF DEC 2016	2,071	648	406	113	3,238
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	-89	-307	-248	-194	-838

BAHÁ'Í ELECTIONS (2016-2017)

FORMATION OF BAHA'I COUNCILS	DELEGATE ELECTION	LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES
TOTAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	TOTAL ADULT BELIEVERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	NUMBER OF ASSEMBLIES ELECTED
82	2016 = 286; 2017 = 583	42

NEW ENROLLMENTS (JAN-DEC 2016)*

YOUTH AND ADULTS ENROLLED	CHILD/JR. YOUTH FROM NEWLY DECLARED FAMILIES	TOTAL NEW ENROLLMENTS
18	49	67

*Latest data not available from the Council



REGIONAL PROFILE – PUNJAB, HARYANA, HIMACHAL PRADESH AND JAMMU & KASHMIR

MOVEMENT OF CLUSTERS

GOAL (BY APR 2021)	CURRENT STATUS (DEC 2016)	NEW CLUSTERS
FOR 2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE
16	5	-

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

PERIOD	BOOK 1	BOOK 2	BOOK 3	BOOK 4	BOOK 5	BOOK 6	BOOK 7
TOTAL AS OF DEC 2016	4,133	1,168	1,016	520	378	366	483
(+) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	205	38	64	23	85	18	16

CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	NO. OF DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	NO. OF CHILDREN'S CLASSES	NO. OF JR. YOUTH GROUPS	NO. OF STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	93	77	73	11	254
AS OF DEC 2016	133	73	74	16	296
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	40	-4	1	5	+42

ATTENDANCE IN CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	ATT. IN DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	ATT. IN CHILDREN'S CLASSES	ATT. IN JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS	ATT. IN STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL ATT. IN ALL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	675	831	594	34	2,134
AS OF DEC 2016	1,428	630	889	57	3,004
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	753	-201	295	23	870

BAHA'Í ELECTIONS (2016-2017)

FORMATION OF BAHÁ'Í COUNCILS	DELEGATE ELECTION	LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES
TOTAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	TOTAL ADULT BELIEVERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	NUMBER OF ASSEMBLIES ELECTED
33	2016 = 77; 2017 = 86	15

NEW ENROLLMENTS (JAN-DEC 2016)

YOUTH AND ADULTS ENROLLED	CHILD/JR. YOUTH FROM NEWLY DECLARED FAMILIES	TOTAL NEW ENROLLMENTS
5	0	5



REGIONAL PROFILE – RAJASTHAN

MOVEMENT OF CLUSTERS

GOAL (BY APR 2021)	CURRENT STATUS (DEC 2016)	NEW CLUSTERS
FOR 2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE
8	3	-

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

PERIOD	BOOK 1	BOOK 2	BOOK 3	BOOK 4	BOOK 5	BOOK 6	BOOK 7
TOTAL AS OF DEC 2016	1,732	522	392	252	159	163	166
(+) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	96	59	60	14	24	0	0

CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	NO. OF DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	NO. OF CHILDREN'S CLASSES	NO. OF JR. YOUTH GROUPS	NO. OF STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	78	25	18	8	129
AS OF DEC 2016	78	26	20	4	128
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	0	1	2	-4	-1

ATTENDANCE IN CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	ATT. IN DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	ATT. IN CHILDREN'S CLASSES	ATT. IN JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS	ATT. IN STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL ATT. IN ALL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	465	273	134	43	915
AS OF DEC 2016	549	269	133	14	965
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	84	-4	-1	-29	50

BAHÁ'Í ELECTIONS (2016-2017)

FORMATION OF BAHÁ'Í COUNCILS	DELEGATE ELECTION	LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES
TOTAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	TOTAL ADULT BELIEVERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	NUMBER OF ASSEMBLIES ELECTED
11	2016 = 46; 2017 = 49	5

NEW ENROLLMENTS (JAN-DEC 2016)

YOUTH AND ADULTS ENROLLED	CHILD/JR. YOUTH FROM NEWLY DECLARED FAMILIES	TOTAL NEW ENROLLMENTS
71	0	71



REGIONAL PROFILE – SIKKIM AND DARJEELING

MOVEMENT OF CLUSTERS

GOAL (BY APR 2021)	CURRENT STATUS (DEC 2016)	NEW CLUSTERS
FOR 2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE
31	13	-

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

PERIOD	BOOK 1	BOOK 2	BOOK 3	BOOK 4	BOOK 5	BOOK 6	BOOK 7
TOTAL AS OF DEC 2016	3,170	1,362	930	818	347	471	264
(+) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	203	39	79	31	16	6	4

CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	NO. OF DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	NO. OF CHILDREN'S CLASSES	NO. OF JR. YOUTH GROUPS	NO. OF STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	366	107	71	6	550
AS OF DEC 2016	274	68	40	11	393
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	-92	-39	-31	5	-157

ATTENDANCE IN CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	ATT. IN DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	ATT. IN CHILDREN'S CLASSES	ATT. IN JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS	ATT. IN STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL ATT. IN ALL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	1,528	971	543	23	3,065
AS OF DEC 2016	1,248	718	282	37	2,285
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	-280	-253	-261	14	-780

BAHÁ'Í ELECTIONS (2016-2017)

FORMATION OF BAHÁ'Í COUNCILS	DELEGATE ELECTION	LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES
TOTAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	TOTAL ADULT BELIEVERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	NUMBER OF ASSEMBLIES ELECTED
61	2016 = 160; 2017 = 143	14

NEW ENROLLMENTS (JAN-DEC 2016)

YOUTH AND ADULTS ENROLLED	CHILD/JR. YOUTH FROM NEWLY DECLARED FAMILIES	TOTAL NEW ENROLLMENTS
35	6	41



REGIONAL PROFILE – TAMILNADU AND PUDHUCHERRY

MOVEMENT OF CLUSTERS

GOAL (BY APR 2021)	CURRENT STATUS (DEC 2016)	NEW CLUSTERS
FOR 2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE
51	17	VEMBAMKOTAI, SATHUR

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

PERIOD	BOOK 1	BOOK 2	BOOK 3	BOOK 4	BOOK 5	BOOK 6	BOOK 7
TOTAL AS OF DEC 2016	13,710	4,142	2,491	1,425	705	909	675
(+) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	190	8	38	7	16	2	0

CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	NO. OF DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	NO. OF CHILDREN'S CLASSES	NO. OF JR. YOUTH GROUPS	NO. OF STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	415	98	118	95	726
AS OF DEC 2016	1,536	121	122	110	1889
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	1121	23	4	15	+1163

ATTENDANCE IN CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	ATT. IN DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	ATT. IN CHILDREN'S CLASSES	ATT. IN JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS	ATT. IN STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL ATT. IN ALL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	2,116	870	824	360	4,170
AS OF DEC 2016	6,860	1,025	878	506	9,269
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	4744	155	54	146	5099

BAHÁ'Í ELECTIONS (2016-2017)

FORMATION OF BAHÁ'Í COUNCILS	DELEGATE ELECTION	LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES
TOTAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	TOTAL ADULT BELIEVERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	NUMBER OF ASSEMBLIES ELECTED
67	2016 = 416; 2017 = 478	39

NEW ENROLLMENTS (JAN-DEC 2016)

YOUTH AND ADULTS ENROLLED	CHILD/JR. YOUTH FROM NEWLY DECLARED FAMILIES	TOTAL NEW ENROLLMENTS
127	12	139



REGIONAL PROFILE – TRIPURA

MOVEMENT OF CLUSTERS

GOAL (BY APR 2021)	CURRENT STATUS (DEC 2016)	NEW CLUSTERS
FOR 2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE
20	12	-

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

PERIOD	BOOK 1	BOOK 2	BOOK 3	BOOK 4	BOOK 5	BOOK 6	BOOK 7
TOTAL AS OF DEC 2016	7,817	2,719	1,822	920	334	715	626
(+) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	103	50	59	26	22	18	17

CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	NO. OF DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	NO. OF CHILDREN'S CLASSES	NO. OF JR. YOUTH GROUPS	NO. OF STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	284	99	54	28	465
AS OF DEC 2016	322	66	46	16	450
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	38	-33	-8	-12	-15

ATTENDANCE IN CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	ATT. IN DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	ATT. IN CHILDREN'S CLASSES	ATT. IN JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS	ATT. IN STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL ATT. IN ALL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	1,975	760	342	86	3,163
AS OF DEC 2016	2,104	579	299	70	3,052
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	129	-181	-43	-16	-111

BAHÁ'Í ELECTIONS (2016-2017)

FORMATION OF BAHÁ'Í COUNCILS	DELEGATE ELECTION	LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES
TOTAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	TOTAL ADULT BELIEVERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	NUMBER OF ASSEMBLIES ELECTED
123	2016 = 187; 2017 = 290	41

NEW ENROLLMENTS (JAN-DEC 2016)

YOUTH AND ADULTS ENROLLED	CHILD/JR. YOUTH FROM NEWLY DECLARED FAMILIES	TOTAL NEW ENROLLMENTS
121	107	228



REGIONAL PROFILE – UTTAR PRADESH, UTTARAKHAND AND DELHI

MOVEMENT OF CLUSTERS

GOAL (BY APR 2021)	CURRENT STATUS (DEC 2016)	NEW CLUSTERS
FOR 2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE
99	39	BILHAUR, BISWA, MAINPURI, BHOGAON

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

PERIOD	BOOK 1	BOOK 2	BOOK 3	BOOK 4	BOOK 5	BOOK 6	BOOK 7
TOTAL AS OF DEC 2016	20,095	4,247	5,005	1,884	2,990	1,270	1,471
(+) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	1,776	644	486	251	484	149	199

CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	NO. OF DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	NO. OF CHILDREN'S CLASSES	NO. OF JR. YOUTH GROUPS	NO. OF STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	2,720	994	721	317	4752
AS OF DEC 2016	3,780	1,042	885	265	5972
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	1060	48	164	-52	+1220

ATTENDANCE IN CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	ATT. IN DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	ATT. IN CHILDREN'S CLASSES	ATT. IN JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS	ATT. IN STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL ATT. IN ALL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	29,398	8,587	5,744	2,118	45,847
AS OF DEC 2016	34,549	9,155	6,817	1,982	52,503
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	5151	568	1073	-136	6656

BAHÁ'Í ELECTIONS (2016-2017)

FORMATION OF BAHÁ'Í COUNCILS	DELEGATE ELECTION	LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES
TOTAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	TOTAL ADULT BELIEVERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	NUMBER OF ASSEMBLIES ELECTED
183	2016 = 713; 2017 = 1256	81

NEW ENROLLMENTS (JAN-DEC 2016)

YOUTH AND ADULTS ENROLLED	CHILD/JR. YOUTH FROM NEWLY DECLARED FAMILIES	TOTAL NEW ENROLLMENTS
908	115	1,023



REGIONAL PROFILE – WEST BENGAL

MOVEMENT OF CLUSTERS

GOAL (BY APR 2021)	CURRENT STATUS (DEC 2016)	NEW CLUSTERS
FOR 2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE	2 ND MILESTONE
29	16	-

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

PERIOD	BOOK 1	BOOK 2	BOOK 3	BOOK 4	BOOK 5	BOOK 6	BOOK 7
TOTAL AS OF DEC 2016	12,385	6,639	5,543	4,035	1,213	2,794	2,076
(+) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	298	146	261	87	139	34	46

CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	NO. OF DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	NO. OF CHILDREN'S CLASSES	NO. OF JR. YOUTH GROUPS	NO. OF STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	306	270	205	123	904
AS OF DEC 2016	415	287	235	128	1065
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	109	17	30	5	+161

ATTENDANCE IN CORE ACTIVITIES

PERIOD	ATT. IN DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS	ATT. IN CHILDREN'S CLASSES	ATT. IN JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS	ATT. IN STUDY CIRCLES	TOTAL ATT. IN ALL CORE ACTIVITIES
AS OF DEC 2015	2,067	2,650	1,798	795	7,310
AS OF DEC 2016	2,816	2,763	2,093	781	8,453
(+/-) JAN 2016 - DEC 2016	749	113	295	-14	1143

BAHÁ'Í ELECTIONS (2016-2017)

FORMATION OF BAHÁ'Í COUNCILS	DELEGATE ELECTION	LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES
TOTAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	TOTAL ADULT BELIEVERS WHO CAST BALLOTS	NUMBER OF ASSEMBLIES ELECTED
86	2016 = 336; 2017 = 407	22

NEW ENROLLMENTS (JAN-DEC 2016)

YOUTH AND ADULTS ENROLLED	CHILD/JR. YOUTH FROM NEWLY DECLARED FAMILIES	TOTAL NEW ENROLLMENTS
38	11	49

REPORT BY OFFICE OF THE NETWORK OF SITES FOR LEARNING FOR THE JUNIOR YOUTH SPIRITUAL EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME

In their recent document, 'Training Institutes: Attaining a Higher Level of Functioning', the International Teaching Center mentions that there are about 70 clusters in the world that are sustaining more than 300 junior youth in the programme, and in some clusters the number of junior youth exceeds even a 1000. They highlight that it is important for us to embrace large numbers of junior youth in several hundred more clusters and that learning sites can assist to systematize the process of learning around it. To this end, the current report captures the journey of a cluster now sustaining 403 participants in 51 groups.

Learning about Growth

Over the last few years, prior to the expansion phase the cluster institute team organizes a gathering in each of the centers of intense activity for all the animators and teachers in which they share the names of their friends who can be invited to the institute process. Teams are then formed that visit the new youth and their families. The youth conferences and cluster youth gatherings helped raise the friends' capacity to engage in meaningful conversations with larger number of youth. On an average, each year conversations are held with 100-150 youth.

Conversations from being limited to youth were over time extended to their families. Initially the institute process was presented as a 'personality development' programme that focused on 'self-improvement'. But the experiences from the learning site and youth movement, contributed to changing the nature of these conversations. Friends began learning to weave in their conversations spiritual concepts from the books of the institute and the youth conference materials.

The study of Book 5 used to be offered mostly in the form of study circles or in a cluster campaign held once a year. From 2013, cluster institute campaigns began to be organized two and then three times a year. Additionally, neighbourhood institute trainings are also organized in 3 neighbourhoods.

As the process of community building has become embedded in the neighbourhoods, one sees the the locals, mostly mothers of youth, children and junior youth being a tremendous support from identifying youth to assisting with the logistics of the trainings.



The number of tutors for Book 5 grew from one to two individuals to some 9 friends. Each year the intake of youth into Book 1 has been increasing in order to increase the intake into book 5. For many years the programme had been growing in 2 centers of intense activities and last year, a third neighbourhood saw rapid growth in the number of junior youth groups. Two neighbourhoods are sustaining 125-180 junior youth and one street has 'saturated' 70-80 junior youth.

Accompanying one another along a path of service and raising the capacity for coordination

In 2011, four members of a junior youth group that entered the programme in 2007, completed 6 texts of the programme and entered the institute process. By 2013, they had gained a year's experience with their own activities and were encouraged to begin to serve their cluster as coordinators for the 3 educational activities, while also continuing their college education. The movement of these youth from children's classes to junior youth groups and into the institute process had led to a process of capacity building that in turn had an impact on the quality of their service and their accompaniment toward others.

In the last four years, 100% of newly trained animators have been mobilized to form their junior Book 5 youth groups, due to the quality of the training and accompaniment. For example, during the Book 5 training they get a chance to observe ongoing junior youth groups in the cluster which gives them a clearer picture of how a group can be established and which also inspires them to serve as animators. Even when the new animators have been hesitant, the coordinating team strives in every way to reassure assist them till they do not begin their path of service.

In 2013, for the first time the coordinator identified 5 experienced animators from 2 neighbourhoods to help him support 17 groups. The 'JYSEP team' began to understand more deeply the reality of the groups and assess the kind of accompaniment of them required. They would divide into pairs and regularly visit the animators and their groups. They would meet twice a month to reflect and plan for 15 days. The coordinator now works with 3 neighbourhood level teams that are accompanying the human resources. The teams meet every week in the neighbourhood to plan and reflect. The coordinator joins these teams in their meetings. When the cluster coordinator was appointed as a regional coordinator, one of the experienced animators in the team was naturally identified to serve as cluster coordinator. Hence the new coordinator could continue to build on the accumulated knowledge about the programme and learn about new areas.

The cluster agencies also felt that they could draw on the support of all the teachers and animators, thus creating an environment in which many more could be involved to assist others in their path of service and also help with coordination. One strategy put in place was known as 'cross-visits'. Each animator in the neighbourhood visits another animator's group once in a month to encourage and learn from each other. They were also given simple responsibilities such as inviting animators to the reflection gatherings and making visits to different groups to gather information. Gradually they came to more formally be a part of the neighbourhood teams helping with organizing animator gatherings, junior youth festivals, accompanying new animators form their groups and help them review the texts of the programme. To further build the capacity of the teams special seminars have also been organized for them. They have also been assisted to complete up to Book 10.

Reflection gatherings for animators have been very regular and over the years have evolved from quarterly or monthly cluster level gatherings, to becoming decentralized in the form of weekly neighborhood gatherings for 2 hours. These weekly gatherings are combined with longer reflection gatherings held 3-4 times a year and which last for 2-3 days. These longer reflection spaces are for animators from the entire cluster and even neighbouring clusters to get together and learn from each other. Animators carry out field visits to learn more about a particular element of the junior youth programme. Sharing of experiences, and studying relevant materials such as revisiting sections of Book 5, the messages of the Universal House of Justice and studying the texts of the programme are part of the content of the gathering.

Various agencies and institutions from the cluster institute team, Auxiliary Board members, Women's Committee; Cluster Growth Committee; and the Local Spiritual Assembly, have all been playing a key role in supporting each others' efforts. The strong collaboration among the cluster institute team has helped them meet frequently, to regularly analyze the pyramid and plan how the animators and teachers can progress through the sequence. This provides animators ongoing spiritual nourishment from the Writings, deepening their consciousness on the purpose of 'service'. As such many animators and teachers have completed at least up to book 6 and many also up to Book 7. Coordinators are also eager and swift in sharing insights from seminars at the learning site or other spaces with cluster agencies and with their help apply them in their own cluster. They have also been helping one another to develop the capacity to document key experiences and share them with other institutions and agencies.

Transforming themselves is central to their efforts –keeping service at the center of their lives and also advancing in their academic education; purity in their language and in their choice of entertainment such as Internet browsing; seeking joy rather than temporary excitement; opting for Bahá'í marriage; and above all nurturing the love of Baha'u'llah in their hearts. This year some 22 animators and teachers are keeping the Fast.

Supporting youth in other aspects of their lives

Institutions and agencies take interest in the education of the youth and often consult with them about their future and possible educational courses. There are instances when the Board member and coordinators have accompanied the youth to submit admission forms to various colleges. The entire month of June is dedicated to help graduates of grade 10 and 12 fill out admission forms. At a small level, the coordinating team has been helping 10-15 youth in some subjects, preparing them especially before the exams.

Learning about establishing vibrant junior youth groups year after year

Parents of junior youth and animators

Animators while assisted to build their capacity to converse with parents are not alone in this endeavour. The involvement of adult members of the community, married couples and members of institutions and agencies has lent much support to them.

Home visits to parents are common. These visits are combined with parents gatherings held at least once every year. Friends have been learning that planned visits and gatherings are more effective in allowing for a deeper and more focused conversation. The coordinating team for example began assisting animators to identify concepts from unit 2 of Book 5 and share it with parents. Animators also began to meet together to reflect on the topics discussed during earlier visits and identify the theme for the next visit. Conversations have revolved around areas such as the potential and talents in junior youth; story and concepts in texts such as Breezes of Confirmation and Glimmerings of Hope; how their children are able to choose their future? How they are able to make right moral choices? The need to focus on the positive qualities of junior youth; nature of change in the junior youth; transformation parents hope in their children. Other commonly explored themes have been media, influence of the environment. Cluster agencies have also been conscious that to make the conversations ongoing and more profound, to study sections from book 5 with them, as well as show them videos that describe the process of community building and transformation.

Friends were at the same time conversing with families of animators and teachers. One of the concepts often discussed with the, has been that of 'living a coherent life' in the context of overcoming dichotomies between study and service; how youth's energies are being constructively utilized and how serving their community can help in their studies. Parents often

become the most ardent supporters the moment they begin seeing a change in their children. In fact, as seen in the above paragraphs, parents can lend a very proactive support to the process of community building.

New spaces also begin opening for parents such as the devotional gatherings; Holy Day events; study of book 1; and junior youth festivals, enabling the conversations to revolve around many other teachings of the Faith and how they can be applied to one's life. At one neighbourhood junior youth festival, the friends were awed to see that number of parents that attended were more than the number of junior youth— 350 parents and 200 JY!

Junior youth groups progressing in the texts

Over the years, a trend observed has been that most groups are able to complete 6 texts of the programme and then enter the institute process. The coordinating team maintains a list of all the names of the animators, the text they are studying, lesson completed, and date of establishment of the group. monitors the progress of the groups. Every quarter they monitor the progress of the groups. If animators are struggling to complete a text in 3-4 months, they are met to find out their challenges. With regards the movement of the groups in the text, two main elements have been strengthened. Firstly, to help animators study the text and enhance their ability to understand the concepts and facilitate the text, and secondly, to assist animators to organise junior youth camps during vacations and also over the weekend. Camps have also added greater vibrancy to the groups, creating solid bonds among the junior youth.

Spaces are arranged for animators to fully study the texts either intensively at the cluster level or in the neighbourhood with smaller groups of animators or even individually. In addition, every Saturday mostly all animators in each neighbourhood have a space to come together to prepare. The animators pray together, and then each one silently reads the chapter to be studied with the junior youth and identifies areas that could be the focus of discussion. *Animators have* been able to study 2 to 3 texts a year.

The movement of groups in the texts also implies movement in the understanding of the junior youth – which animators discuss about during animator gatherings. Once the cluster institute team prepared a few questions and shared with animators to help them write how each of the concepts in the texts was influencing the thoughts and actions of the junior youth.

Relationship between the animator and junior youth

It is not uncommon for animators to meet their junior youth more than once a week. They often meet during devotional meetings at each others' homes. Animators are quite close to their junior youth and take genuine interest in their wellbeing. They sit together and talk about their lives. Some animators also take out time to help the junior youth with their studies especially before their exams. Once when one of the junior youth had dropped out of school and his parents had gone to their village, his animator went to the school with him and requested for readmission.

Complementary activities

Creative activities have been planned that are related to concepts and exercises in books such as Breezes of Confirmation, Thinking about Numbers and Spirit of Faith. Nature and educational outings such as visits to the park and museum; organising joint cricket matches between junior youth groups are also common. The junior youth festival emerged as an opportunity for junior youth to present meaningful artistic performances through skits and songs. The coordinating team has been conscious that the performances reflect only the concepts in the texts rather than mainstream 'Bollywood' songs and dances.

Service projects

For about 2 years service projects have been a focus of discussions in many regional and cluster gatherings. friends learnt about the idea of 'collective service projects' where many groups in a neighbourhood could come together to implement one project. They learnt about how it can be related to the needs of the community, how it can go beyond charity to also address social and cultural issues. for example, raising awareness on 'unity between people of different castes', 'awareness about the methods of preventing the spread of mosquitoes',



making paper carry bags and distributing them to shopkeepers to discuss about the damages caused by polythene bags. They also learnt about how it can even be a process. For example, a cleaning project continued for many months rather than being limited to a one day event. The impact was that to some extent it helped the residents become aware of the dustbins that had been placed and use them for disposing garbage. 3-4 groups also began to carry out many projects in a year.

Frontiers

The cluster is aiming to raise and sustain 1000 junior youth by the end of the Plan, by for instance learning to how 'saturate' many 'mohallas' in the neighbourhoods. A question for them is how will the coordination scheme evolve then? Other questions are how to also help more groups complete 9 texts of the programme? And how to help majority of the junior youth to enter the institute process, year after year?

PREPARATION FOR SOCIAL ACTION (PSA) SEMINARS IN INDIA

Since the Preparation for Social Action (PSA) seminars started in India in 2011, 444 participants from 177 clusters have attended at least one seminar. The year 2016-17 saw the PSA seminars gain momentum in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Bihar and Jharkhand regions, where new seminars have started being conducted by tutors from the respective regions. In addition to the support of the various institutions and agencies, this new stage has been possible because of the efforts made by the PSA team in each region and regular spaces for tutors to advance their understanding and reflect on their experiences.

Region	No. of Tutors*	No. of groups in 2016-17	No. of Seminars in 2016-17	No. of Participants
Uttar Pradesh	7	4 (ongoing)	5	86
Bihar and Jharkhand	6	2 (1 completed, 1 ongoing)	3	58
Maharashtra	3	2 (ongoing)	3	38

*Tutors who have assisted in conducting at least 1 seminar

The first group of participants of West Bengal and Tamil Nadu are also nearing the end of the series of seminars after which new participants will join the series of seminars conducted by tutors of their own regions.

Region	No. of groups in 2016-17	No. of Seminars in 2016-17	No. of Participants
Tamil Nadu	1	2	16
West Bengal and Tripura	1	2	25

In addition to the PSA seminars gaining momentum, the vision and purpose of the seminars have also evolved, opening new frontiers of learning for this line of action. The PSA seminars continue to serve as a way to familiarize rising number of individuals with the texts of the PSA program so that, in time and under the guidance of Office for Social and Economic Development (OSED), advance clusters can start implementing the PSA program. Generating learning for the wider implementation of the program has already been initiated by Delhi and Sangli clusters, where PSA groups have started having study meetings for significant number of hours in a week and carrying out practices and service projects for the well-being of their communities. Wherever Ruhi Institute program and PSA program have started working side by side, the Bahá'í communities have started having a glimpse of how science and religion are "two interacting knowledge systems" and "two complementary sources" that impel social progress—a progress that represents "a fusion of the material and spiritual imperatives of life".

What has also become abundantly clear is that the seminars contribute significantly to the advancement of capabilities of individuals at the forefront of community building process. Keeping this in mind, although familiarizing the friends with the texts of PSA program will continue to be one of the outcomes of the PSA seminars, contributing to the process of capacity building of members of institutions and agencies have become the primary purpose of the PSA seminars. PSA seminars can be seen as one of the spaces that contribute to developing "the capacity of cluster agencies to learn and to act systematically".

Each individual goes through a series of 3 seminars of 8 days each, organized at regional or sub-regional level, within a period of a year and a half. In each of these seminars, the participants study 2 units and do practices which help them advance certain capabilities.

Seminar No.	Units of Instruction	Primary Capabilities
Seminar 1	<i>Properties and Classification</i>	i. Reading the reality of a cluster/community
Seminar 2	<i>Numerical Statement and Systems and Processes</i>	i. Reading the reality of a cluster/community ii. Understanding and describing the processes unfolding in a cluster/community
Seminar 3	<i>The Heating and Cooling of Matter and Health and Disease</i>	i. Learning through a process of action, reflection, and consultation ii. Learning through meaningful conversations

The selection of participants is vital to the success of the PSA seminars. The participants of the seminars are members of cluster level agencies and members of institutions and agencies who accompany them. Until now, there has not been any strategic selection process of the participants. In order to become “methodical” in our selection process we need to think about the following questions: Does someone in their first year of service in the cluster level agencies benefit from the seminars as much as someone serving in their second or subsequent years? Is it much urgent for someone serving a cluster far along the second milestone to attend the seminars than for someone serving a cluster in its initial stages of growth? How can the participants be selected so that the seminars do not hamper the momentum of the growth process? Given the number of spaces already available for the cluster level agencies, how can the selection be made in a way that the participants are not faced with conflicting choices? Who must be consulted to make the selection of the participants and who must finalize the list?

Once the selection of the participants has been made for the seminars, the invitation process needs to be given its due attention. If the selection of participants is done strategically and with the involvement of different agencies and institutions then the invitation process becomes much easier. In addition to the PSA team making formal and informal invitations to the participants, it is very important for different agencies and institutions to not only encourage the participants to attend the seminars but also make it possible by advance planning.

In order for the seminars to be effective in advancing the capabilities of the agencies and institutions, the quality of the tutors is of vital importance. There is no doubt that the tutors of the seminars must be among the most experienced and capable in the region. There are again a few questions that need to be given thought at the regional level to ensure that the seminars have such tutors: Keeping in mind that the capable individuals also have many other responsibilities in the region, how do we make possible for a few among them to serve as tutors for the seminars? How many such capable tutors can the region delegate without compromising on the priorities of the Plan? It must be noted that, in a year, a tutor conducts 2 seminars of 8 days each and attends 2 gatherings of 6 days each devoted to their own capacity building, reflection and planning.

In addition to finding the answers to these vital questions, continued learning to improve the quality of the seminars and the practices will have to be a major concern of all those involved in conducting the seminars. As more and more members of the agencies and institutions participate in the seminars, we will also need to observe how the seminars are benefiting the participants in advancing the process of community building. Finally, the role of the regional

PSA team will become more and more important as the seminars progress in a region. This is another vital area that must be given thought at the regional level.

We are confident in finding answers to these and many questions, since the Bahá'í community has learnt to avoid the mode of thinking which makes us "see activities, and the agencies that support them, in competition with one another". We have also "come to recognize that when a new feature is introduced it requires special attention for some time". We have also understood that "we must be alert to the potential offered by any instrument of the Plan that proves to be especially suited to a particular point in time and, where called for, invest greater energy in its development" and that every individual need not "be occupied with the same aspect of the Plan".

LIFE-BLOOD OF THE FAITH

There was great outpouring of a fresh enthusiasm among individual believers and various institutions throughout the country to attain self-sufficiency in carrying forward and to accelerate efforts to educate the believers on the importance of Funds. Lot of efforts were made everywhere to study the relevant portions of 29th December 2015 Message of the Universal House of Justice addressed to the Continental Boards of Counsellors, as well as the Ridván Message of 2016, enabling them to get new insights on the infalible guidance of our Supreme Body and motivation to follow them in letter and spirit.

The two-day National-level Workshops on Fund Development & Management held at New Delhi and Bangaluru on 2nd & 3rd and on 9th & 10th July 2016, respectively, were a humble beginning for the Treasurers and Accountants of Regional Councils and Training Institute Boards to deepen their knowledge and sharpen their skills to take this forward. It was a good occasion for great learning and delightful experience not only to the participants, but also to those serving in the Departments of Treasury and Comptroller. The discussion on how to manage funds complying with Rules & Regulations, Policies & Procedures was found very informative to the participants. Likewise, developing an efficient mechanism for collection of funds, especially from rural areas. This was organized, in response to the recommendation of the National Convention held last year.



The Regional/State Bahá'í Councils and many major Local Spiritual Assemblies have been sharing their experience and knowledge about fund development and management. Its impact was reflected in different ways in various parts of the country. According to the reports available at National Treasury, the Councils of Andhra Pradesh & Telengana, Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra & Goa, Manipur & Mizoram and Tripura have exceeded the amount promised to be raised during the year. Councils of Sikkim & Darjiling and Punjab area are very close to such an achievement as of now. As usual, State of Maharashtra continued to be the main pillar and strongest supporter of National Treasury. State Bahá'í Councils of Gujarat and Rajasthan have voluntarily kept away from seeking any financial support.

More than Rs.4.18 Crores has been contributed by believers from the country to National Fund, including for Temple maintenance. There is an increase of Rs.15 lakhs compared to last year's. This is apart from the contributions made at local level and in kind. Ear-marked contribution for the maintenance of the Bahá'í House of Worship at New Delhi increased over Rs.19 Lakhs. Last year it was Rs.16 Lakhs. The number of contributors and amount of contribution to Continental Fund and International Funds have also increased. Friends have come forward in large numbers to contribute to Bihar Sharif Temple Fund, the building of the Education Centre Fund (at the premises of the House of Worship, New Delhi), Chile Temple Fund, Temples Fund to support the 7 new Houses of Worship throughout the world, etc. It was very heartening to note that the friends have enthusiastically come forward to assist the Institutions in constructing cluster development facilities/Bahá'í Centres, repairs and maintenance of Bahá'í properties etc., by providing fund, materials and manpower.

The Universal House of Justice has called upon all believers to 'manage their financial affairs in accordance with spiritual principles'. Mindful of this command, National Treasury was very conscious in adopting austerity measures at national and regional levels. As a result, despite price escalation, the operational expenses of National Assembly and maintenance expenses of the Temple had come down considerably. Councils have been able to bring down their financial requirement, by meeting expenses from the funds they have raised from within their respective regions.

The House of Justice had written: "the act of contributing to the Fund is a practical way of hastening the advent of future civilization envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh, which is a prosperous one". So, the Institutions are very clear about their unavoidable and inescapable duty of educating believers on the spiritual significance of contributing to various Funds of the Faith. The believers are also excited when they read the Message that "the duty to contribute, just like the duty to teach, is a fundamental aspect of Bahá'í identify which strengthens faith". When these feelings combined together, the result was successful organizing of many fund conferences, awareness classes, workshops, home visits, activities with full financial self-sufficiency, etc. We have received many such reports, due to space constraints we can share just a few.

The State Bahá'í Council of Karnataka organised a State Level Fund Conference on 24th and 25th December 2016 for educating the believers on Importance of Bahá'í Funds, it was attended by friends from 6 different clusters. The friends actively participated in the discussion and gained deeper insights on management of Bahá'í Funds. The Council is also planning a series of such conferences at local/cluster-level to increase the awareness among the believers towards the Bahá'í Fund. The Conference was self-sufficient and a sum of Rs. 2800/- was the surplus.

The Regional Bahá'í Council of Maharashtra & Goa has organised an Annual Planning gathering for 5 days and on the 4th day of the gathering (8-1-17). As the participants were mostly youths, their discussion topic was to raise their consciousness about how Bahá'u'lláh expects to earn and spend their wealth and also discussed about the concepts of Universal Participation and flow of Funds etc. There are 12 Fund Development Officers appointed by the Council.

The Local spiritual Assembly of Sangli, Maharashtra has taken initiative to organize a Fund Conference on 17 July 2016 for Sangli and its neighbouring clusters. Before the conference, LSA and the CGC had a Joint consultation regarding the over-all program. They have visited many clusters to invite friends. On the day of conference 44 friends came from 4 communities. Presentation on "Spiritual privilege of contributing to Bahá'í Funds" delivered by the Secretary of Local Assembly and beautiful stories told by Auxiliary Board member were much appreciated. After the study, around 38 friends gave their pledges to the Funds and the LSA Treasurer will be in their close contact to follow up on these pledges.

The Treasurer of SBC of Madhya Pradesh along with one of the Council members visited Khargone, the IPG cluster of Madhya Pradesh to share the significance of Universal Participation in contributing to funds and develop the habit of contribution to the Funds generously and regularly. As a continuance of the series of educating the believers towards Bahá'í Fund, the Council has again taken the Initiative to gather the believers and share the concepts of 'contribution' on 8th January, 2017 in Indore Bahá'í Bhawan, when around 50 to 60 friends were gathered from 8 different clusters. During the Gathering 34 friends offered their pledges for contributing towards National Fund and Temple Fund on monthly basis.

In Saputara, the State Bahá'í Council of Gujarat has organised a 2-days Fund conference with the theme "Bahá'í Fund and the Spiritual Enterprises" on 21st and 22nd May 2016. More than

one hundred fifty friends were participated wholeheartedly in the Program. During these two days, friends did have an opportunity to reflect upon the various concepts and principles of the Bahá'í Fund. The Conference helped the friends to better understand the privilege of giving towards the Bahá'í Fund and attributes of our soul. The Ridván 2016 Message was also studied together, which assisted the friends to develop their spiritual qualities and better understanding in context of Sacrifice and Willingness to support the Bahá'í Fund. They also discussed other subjects like Role of Local Spiritual Assembly in Fund education, Bahá'í Fund and Spiritual Enterprise etc.

The Regional Bahá'í Council of Manipur & Mizoram has self-sufficiently organized a Regional Fund Gathering on 22nd and 23rd October 2016, with the help of Auxiliary Board members and the Training Institute Board, in the presence of National Treasurer. To make the program successful, they listed out the entire requirement in advance and printed the particulars with the respective current market price, so that friends could contribute in kind or cash. During invitation process they conversed about the need for achieving self-sufficiency and creating sense of belonging towards the material needs of the Faith. Around 40 friends could present on the two days gathering.



The Regional Bahá'í Council of Punjab has taken their grave responsibility to contribute towards Bahá'í Fund very seriously. Recently there was widely discussion and consultation held on this subject in the gathering of PG clusters held in Shimla (June) and other one Regional reflection gathering held (July) in Chandigarh. As a result, many pledges were collected from the friends. During the month of September 2016, the Council visited Jammu and held a meeting with the Assembly. One of the subjects of the discussion was regular, generous and sacrificial contribution to the Fund. They were motivated with many stories and examples shared with them. As a result they were able to procure many pledges.

The RBC of Sikkim & Darjeeling organized Two Fund Conferences on 6th and 7th August 2016, one in Sikkim and the other in Darjeeling respectively. Friends from different clusters throughout Sikkim and Darjeeling participated with a lot of enthusiasm. A total of around 95 friends attended the Conference. The programme included the Study of Paragraphs 45 and 46 of the 29th December 2015 Message of the House of Justice. The Treasurer also shared the learning acquired from the 2 day conference in Delhi on 2nd and 3rd July. Programme was self-sufficient. Pledges were also received from the friends for contribution to different funds.

Bahá'í Fund Education Program was organized by the State Bahá'í Council of West Bengal on 27th and 28th August 2016 at Kolkata, West Bengal. The atmosphere was filled with full of spirituality, devotion and commitment towards the Cause and the Bahá'í Fund. 163 friends from 21 clusters, including 2 friends from Tripura, enthusiastically participated in the program. The invitees to the program were from Local Spiritual Assemblies, all the Assistants to the Treasurer, the Facilitators of the Cluster Growth Committees as well as members and Sub Regional Facilitators, Cluster Coordinators and Sub Regional coordinators, teachers, tutors and animators, identified resource persons from those parts of the region where there is no agency or Assembly.

There was a very beautiful and enchanting fund conference held in Rajasthan at Jaipur on 20th and 21st August, 2016, in which, more than 50 friends attended. The conference was facilitated by National Treasurer. There was a lot of learning during the conference and the Holy Writings were also discussed in groups and this helped the friends to gain a deeper understanding of the Writings. Some passages from the Ruhi Book-2 were also discussed in groups and friends actively participated in the discussion and shared some local stories of how friends contributed towards the various funds.



The Regional Treasurer of Tamil Nadu & Puducherry along with Auxiliary Board member, Assistant Treasurer and some local friends organised a beautiful and inspiring Fund gathering in Viruthunagar cluster at Moolipatti Village on 4-12-16, in which around 37 friends participated. They started a gathering with some vital Questions like What is Contribution?, Why we have to contribute? And what is the difference between Bahá'í Fund and Others? The Regional Treasurer shared some Quotes of Bahá'u'lláh with the friends and discussed on it and friends gained a deep understanding on the specific subject. He continued that we can contribute Bahá'í Fund through cash, kind and labour and also shared many stories. Friends also planned that they will share the importance of Bahá'í Fund with other friends during 19 day feast, Devotional gathering and wherever they get the opportunity. Many friends gave their pledges and promised to give the contribution on a regular basis.

Regional Council of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya & Nagaland has organized a Regional Fund Workshop on 27th and 28th August 2016. A 6-member Fund Development Committee, appointed by the Council, is looking after the education of believers at grass root level.

The State Bahá'í Council of Kerala has continued its 'Fund Yathra' during the current year also, so as to create awareness among various communities. The greatest achievement they could make was raising of about Rs.2.25 Lakhs for conducting a self-sufficient, very successful, Winter School in December 2016.

A well-organized Family Conference was conducted at Agarthala on 24th and 25th December 2016 by the SBC of Tripura with the objective to involve more and more families in the core activities and contribution to the Baha'i Fund. More than 200 believers participated.

Majority of the Assistants to the Regional Treasurer of UP region are very active. Wherever they go, they carry Receipt Books and issue receipts to contributors on the spot. Further, they make use of such opportunities to educate the local believers on the importance of Funds.

The Regional Councils of Odisha, Andhra Pradesh & Telangana and Bihar have also carried out many activities for educating the believers on the importance of Fund.

During the year under report, the National Assembly has invested funds for much capital expenditure. Education Centre Building, the construction of which is progressing well. This 9-Crore project is intended for providing facilities to the on-going activities for training junior youths and the youths. Construction of building for cluster facilities is progressing well at Pendam (Sikkim), Alouli (Bihar), Udaipur (Tripura) and Sahar (Uttar Pradesh). These are the

Centres where we have provided financial assistance amounting to Rs.21.16 Lakhs during the year. Manipur was financially assisted in acquiring a Gulistan. Construction of a permanent headquarters for the SBC of Tripura at Agartala is also progressing well. The involvement of the community, with a sense of belonging, is amazing. Significant amount has been spent for the repairs and maintenance of some of the Bahá'í properties in the country.

The National Fund Development Officer was very helpful to the Councils in organizing fund awareness programmes and preparing materials for the same. October-December issue of 'Life Blood' edited by her was widely circulated. The Staff serving in the Department of Treasury of the National Assembly has worked as a Team and that is the main reason for its success. The Office of Comptroller was always helpful. Timely guidance from the National Spiritual Assembly was a source of encouragement and confidence.

The present Five Year Plan thrusts upon each one of us the heavy responsibility to support the Bahá'í Funds. The money being spent by the Assembly is to translate the goals into reality – to promote the community development activities taking shape around us and to transform this world into a better one. Let us rise to the occasion and discharge the duty of contributing and educating, which is elevated to the rank of 'teaching'. The National Spiritual Assembly in general and its Department of Treasury in particular are looking forward to assist everyone in whatever way possible, to achieve this goal.

STUDIES IN GLOBAL PROSPERITY – SEMINARS FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Studies in Global Prosperity has over the past eight years offered the seminars for Bahá'í university students at the undergraduate and the graduate levels for the Bahá'í youth in India. These seminars have been developed by the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity and they are offered globally in all five continents. In India, the seminars are offered in English and in Hindi.

Given below is a brief description of the activities related to these seminars that were held in 2016-17.

I. Seminar for University Graduates and Young Professionals

The seminar for Bahá'í university graduates and young professionals titled 'Discourse and Social Transformation: Achieving Coherence' was offered in the picturesque setting of the New



Era Teacher Training Centre (NETTC), Panchgani from 1 to 12 June 2016. Twenty one youth from India, Vietnam, Philippines, USA, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia participated in this seminar. The successful completion of a preparatory online course was a prerequisite for participation in the seminar. The 21 participants who made it to the seminar were immersed in an intensive yet joyful collective learning environment where they reflected

together on materials related to approaches to participating in the discourses of society, fundamental concepts such as human nature, oneness, power, knowledge, justice, science, religion and development and they looked at frameworks for engagement in discourses such as equality of women and men and on technology.

II. Undergraduate seminar – English

The undergraduate seminar in English titled 'Participating in the Prevalent Discourses of Society' was held at NETTC in Panchgani from 15 to 25 June 2016. A total of 44 participants from all over the country attended the seminar. These seminars are a sequence of four yearly offerings designed to complement a student's progress through undergraduate study. This year saw groups going through all four years of the seminars.

Apart from studying these materials, participants analyzed films, short stories, poems and essays together, play sports and spent a day on a field trip where they practiced having conversations with people in different public spaces.



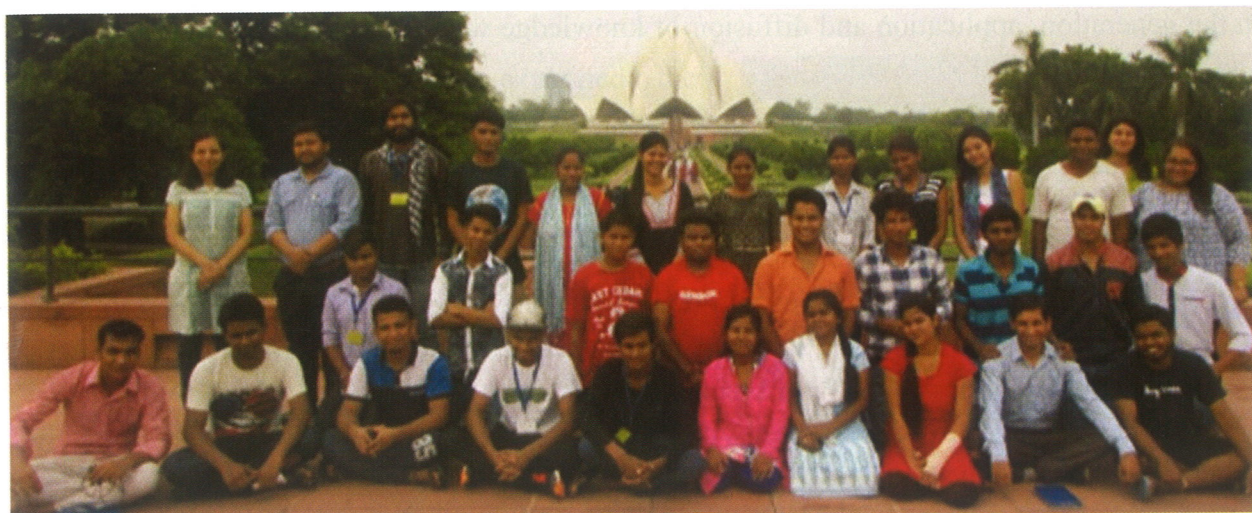
Mid-year gathering:

This year for the first time the coordinating team of the seminars in English decided to have a gathering of the seminar participants in the middle of the year. The gathering was held from 30 December 2016 to 1 January 2017 and there were 11 participants in all. The youth studied various messages of the Universal House of Justice during these three days and also did a refresher of some of the year 1 seminar materials.



III. Undergraduate seminar – Hindi

The undergraduate seminar in Hindi took place from 5 to 15 July 2016 at the Bahá'í House of Worship in Delhi for 32 Bahá'í youth from different neighborhoods of Delhi and Chandigarh.



The first and second seminars were offered. The content and format of the Hindi seminar is the same as the one offered in English.

IV. Preparatory gathering in Tamil Nadu

In preparation from starting to offer the seminars in Tamil from the summer of 2017, a gathering was organized for selected members of institutions in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry from 16-18 December. There were eighteen participants who included Regional Council members and Auxiliary Board Members.



SOCIAL ACTION DESK

Social action has been an integral aspect of the work of the Bahá'í community in India for several decades now. As early as the 1960s efforts in this area of endeavor have included literacy projects and rural development schemes. Since then, the number of initiatives in various fields has been increasing, the majority being small-scale activities implemented at the grassroots by individuals or groups of believers. A percentage of these have grown in size and complexity, as circumstances and resources have allowed, and are now functioning as sustained social and economic development projects. Among these are a number of academic schools and Bahá'í-inspired organizations implementing one or another programme. The significant progress with regard to the expansion and consolidation of the Faith, especially over the last decade or so, has drawn the Bahá'í community of India even further into the life of society. With increasing experience in building vibrant communities through the strengthening of communal worship and spiritual education of children, youth and adults, the spiritual foundations are being laid by developing capacity in the local population to actively participate in the generation, application and diffusion of knowledge with the vision to create a spiritually and materially prosperous civilization.

As a result, many more endeavors are emerging at various levels of complexity, and it is expected that the number of these efforts will continue to increase as capacity is raised among individuals, communities, and institutions. In response to these advances, the National Spiritual Assembly considered it timely to establish a Social Action Desk. Given the complexity of this area of endeavor, the responsibilities and details of the work of the Desk will need to evolve and become clearer over time. So far, the social action desk and the task force for social action have been pursuing various lines of action to document the efforts of the Indian Bahá'í community in the area of social action while raising consciousness about the same through the study of documents in various spaces.

Gatherings to study the document on social action

The purpose of the gatherings to study the 26th November 2012 document on social action prepared by Office of Social and Economic Development (OSD) has been to raise our consciousness about the nature and methodology of Bahá'í social and economic development. By placing it in the context of current activity at the level of the cluster, the document draws from experience gained by the Bahá'í world over the past decades in this area of activity. 18 gatherings were planned and conducted in the past year in 12 regions of India, in which around 490 participated with the active support of State and Regional Councils, Counsellors and Local Spiritual Assemblies at the regional, sub-regional and, in a few cases, cluster levels.



Understanding that the first stirrings of social action are “*a natural outcome of the rise both in resources and in the consciousness of the implications of the Revelation for the life of a population...*”¹, the purpose of the study of the document was not to make plans to initiate efforts in this area of activity. It was felt important that consciousness be raised about the nature of social action as more and more clusters are strengthening the capacity to embrace large numbers and to manage complexity as the growth process gains intensity. The vision is to see social action undertaken not in a haphazard manner or in ways that merely imitate what is seen in the wider development field, but rather in ways that are consistent with the same framework on which our expansion and consolidation efforts are based, and which reinforce—not distract from—these efforts. Thus the friends who participated in these two to three day long gatherings were Auxiliary Board members, members of Councils, Training Institute boards, sub-regional and a few cluster coordinators and representatives of Bahá’í inspired organizations and certain Local Spiritual Assemblies. The participation of friends serving in diverse capacities created a conducive space to reflect on how coherence within and among the areas of activity could be achieved and to collectively explore how the humble instances of social action are organically emerging in advanced clusters.

During the gatherings, friends expanded their understanding of the conditions that pave way for endeavors in the area of social action to flourish and explored the elements of the conceptual framework that guide efforts in this area. The elements that were studied which defined the nature of Bahá’í social and economic development assisted us to recognize the need for coherence between the spiritual and the material when encouraging universal participation by building capacity of individuals, institutions and community. In relation to methodology of Bahá’í social and economic development, friends reflected on how we could read society with higher degrees of accuracy through the process of consultation while pursuing systematic action and reflection on action by being conscious that:



*“In the efforts of Bahá’ís everywhere, then, can be seen the emergence of a global community which, connected through its institutions, is striving to establish a pattern of activity that gives due respect to local autonomy without creating a sense of isolation from the whole, that attaches importance to material means without allowing them to become instruments of control, that provides for the flow of knowledge without introducing paternalistic attitudes, that strengthens capacity in individuals without any regard for their economic background.”*²

In the light of the document, participants examined the prevalent approaches to development in the world at large, as well as the diverse social and economic development efforts that have been taken up by Bahá’ís over the past decades. These were compared to the concepts, principles, methods and approaches that characterize the present pattern of community building

which is being pursued in a mode of learning in action in numerous neighborhoods and villages. The collective understanding of participants grew about how “...the scope and complexity of social action at any given moment must be commensurate with the human resources available in a community to carry it forward.”³

Conceiving social action in terms of a spectrum, experiences that were commonly shared reflected the non-formulaic unfoldment of social action at varying degrees of complexity. Friends explored how social action can range from informal efforts of limited duration initiated by individuals or groups like service projects taken up under the junior youth empowerment program, to sustained social and economic development projects like a village school providing education to the young ones of the locality and how a few projects can even evolve into complex Bahá’í-inspired development organizations.

During the gatherings friends were mindful that we need to engage in an intense process of learning about “how the first stirrings in the area of social will manifest themselves in clusters where the dual process of expansion and consolidation is robust, the extent to which cultivation and direction from the institutions will be required and the ways in which endeavors of social action will strengthen the fabric of community life”⁴ while recognizing that our understanding and application of spiritual principles that are to guide development practice will expand “only as effort is made to draw on insights from His Revelation, to tap into the accumulating knowledge of the human race, to apply His teachings intelligently to the life of humanity, and to consult on the questions that arise will the necessary learning occur and capacity be developed.”⁵

Social action seminars

A document was prepared by Office of Social and Economic Development (OSSED) in August 2016 which shed light on the diverse social action efforts being taken up with various degrees of complexity in the region of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Delhi. It also put forward questions to assist friends studying it to reflect on the areas where learning could be systematized.

Four social action seminars were held to have consultations based on this document under the guidance of Counselors for 200 friends serving in different capacities in Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. Participants reflected on the experience that has been gained so far in relation to social action and to consider the learning process ahead. They consulted on how the first stirrings of social action are emerging in advanced clusters; the various means of communication that are being used for social transformation; how the junior youth spiritual empowerment program is advancing to develop capacity in young people for service and social action; how the study of the Preparation for Social Action materials has strengthened service being rendered by participants studying it; how Bahá’í-inspired schools when continuing to strengthen the quality of academic education are advancing in their capacity to offer education that increasingly reflects the vision contained in the Writings, while drawing from the community building work underway; and how more complex Bahá’í-inspired organizations can apply the elements of the conceptual framework guiding the global Plan.

Social action in advanced clusters

In advanced clusters friends are collectively documenting insights on how spiritual empowerment of populations is manifesting itself in changes in the social and economic dimensions of villages or neighborhoods where community building efforts has led to sufficient abundance of human resources and where a pattern of growth has been firmly established. Apart from the social action gatherings and seminars, representatives of the desk visited 12 clusters to reflect on how individual choices or grassroots initiatives among groups of individuals have emerged to improve social and economic conditions, how institutions have cultivated efforts and how change in culture is visible at the level of the community. Heightened social



consciousness was evident when friends shared the nature of discussions between those participating in educational activities which have often led to initiatives to offer academic assistance or that have led to new patterns of thought and behavior at the level of the community inspired by principles of oneness of humanity, the equality of men and women, the immutable belief in justice and inherent nobility of human beings.

Bahá'í-inspired organizations

The national database of Bahá'í-inspired social and economic development initiatives has been and continues to be updated through the assistance of Councils and various individual members of local communities. Also, visits were made to 25 Bahá'í-inspired schools in various parts of the country in order to learn what insights have been gained about strengthening the social and economic dimensions of communities. The friends serving in these organizations were consulted with about the circumstances that inspired the establishment of their organization, their past and present experiences of having worked towards it and their vision for the future. As most organizations are working in the field of education, friends explored and reflected on our conception and vision of Bahá'í inspired education and the diverse ways in which we are striving towards it.

In the coming year, the social action desk will continue to organize seminars in various regions for the study of relevant materials, visit selected clusters that have surpassed the third milestone to observe and learn about the emergence of capacity for social action, maintain a database of sustained and complex projects, become familiar with existing projects and organizations, and analyze and document relevant experiences and insights. In pursuing these lines of action a growing number of friends will be collaborated with in various ways to further advance learning about social action.

BUILDING RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT, CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE PUBLIC

CONTRIBUTING TO THE DISCOURSES OF SOCIETY ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL 2016-17

In its desire to contribute to social transformation in India, the Bahá'í Community has witnessed notable developments in its community-building endeavors over decades. At the same time, it has striven to participate in the life of Indian society and contribute to its progress. The construction of the Bahá'í House of Worship and presence in interfaith endeavours and spaces related to communal harmony naturally drew the Bahá'í community more and more into the public sphere.

One dimension of its efforts to engage in the wider society has been through the field of external affairs. This report carries highlights of the ongoing journey of the office to deepen partnerships and contribute to the discourses of society through a reflective sharing of experiences from April 2016 – March 2017. The office made further efforts at developing relations with members and sections of government as well with individuals and groups operating in the sphere of civil society on the national stage. In addition to providing details of the impact of the participation of the office in relevant discourses of society, this report includes updates on building relationship with government and civil society organizations, strengthening Bahá'í presence on the Web, public Information activities including relation with media.

Participating in the discourses of society on the national stage

The external affairs strategy paper dated 20th October 2014 received from the Bahá'í World Centre states that *"The overarching objective of the Bahá'í community's external affairs efforts for the coming years will be to increase the range and depth of its contributions to the life of society at the level of thought in an ever-rising number of social spaces on the national and international stages."*

In light of this, the office is mainly focusing on the following three discourses to work upon in various degrees of involvement and engagement.

I. Role of Youth in Society

Following the youth conferences of 2013, thousands of young people across the country engaged in offering acts of service in different neighbourhoods and villages including efforts to help those younger than themselves to channel their energies for the spiritual and material well-being of their communities. India has the largest youth population in the world and the role of youth in transforming India is being discussed in various social spaces. This experience prompted the office to promote the discourse on the role of youth in social transformation.

Participation of the office in Post 2015 development agenda in 2013 led to collaborate with Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) in organizing series of seminars and workshops on the role of youth in social transformation in last few years. The office is also exploring different spaces and interacted with a number of organizations working on the issues of youth.

The office was invited to speak on the role of youth in one of the sessions of the Conference on *"Religious Coexistence and Respect for Diversity in Indian Context"* on 9th December 2016 organized by Interfaith Foundation India and Sadbhavna Sewa Sansthan. The office representative also participated in a workshop on *"Media Training: Empowering Responsible Youth Interfaith Practitioners in the Digital Age"* on 8th and 9th April 2016 organized by Sarva Dharma Samvaad.

II. Religious Coexistence

For decades, the office has been a member of national interfaith organizations, and the Bahá'í community has often been turned to for the promotion of and leadership in efforts to bring about religious co-existence and peace. Interfaith dialogue has often promoted a number of important issues in India: communal harmony, ending female foeticide and infanticide, and establishing peace, security and non-violence. Over the years, the office was involved in consultations that led to the formation of number of inter-faith bodies.

With rising tension in recent years between various religious groups, growing attention is being given to interfaith dialogue in the country, and the Bahá'í community has been contributing to the discourse on religious co-existence. The escalation of intolerance and conflict between religious groups has given rise to interest among certain academics in the role of religion in establishing peace and harmony. The office has participated and organized number of consultation on this discourse. The office has sought to explore spaces where these discussions are taking place and to build relationships with some of these academics. The office was also invited to speak on "Role of Religion in Countering Violence" on 2nd July 2016 and "Role of Arts and Culture in Promoting World Peace" on 16 April 2016. The office is planning this year to have series of discussions on this theme in collaboration with like-minded groups and individuals.



Beyond the question of religious co-existence, the office has been trying to bring a new conception of religion into every space in which it participates. This conception promotes an understanding of certain characteristics of religion: religion as a source of unity; religion in harmony with science; religion as promoter of the oneness of humanity and the spiritual nature of the human being, among others.

The office also gets invited every year to participate in an inter-faith prayer meetings organized on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's birth and death anniversary. This programme is being organized by Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, functioning under the Ministry of Culture. Prime Minister, President, Vice President, Members of Parliament are among the dignitaries attend these events.

This provided opportunity to the office to strengthen its presence at the national level. Through these events the office has also consolidating its relation with the organizer.



The office is continuing its participation on the discourse on child rights which is an initiative of India Alliance for Child Rights (IACR). IACR is an alliance of NGOs, think tanks, activists, academia and concerned individuals working for the realization of rights of children and the office is a founder member of this coalition.

In 2014, IACR initiated to form National Action Coordination Group for Ending Violence Against Children (NACG) in India with the recommendation of South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC) which is an apex body of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). This group was formed mainly to bring together different stakeholders to promote interaction and joint advocacy. At the invitation of SAIEVAC, the office becomes the member of this group.

In a meeting called by SAIEVAC in Colombo in the month of December 2016 supported by Arigatou International Foundation and South and East Asia the office of World Vision, a new initiative begun to call on religious leaders and faith based organizations to address the issue of violence against children. To this end, a small focus group of individuals met in Bahá'í House in November 2016 where the Director General of SAIEVAC was also present. The purpose of the meeting was mainly to discuss about initiating a process of forming a regional forum or platform of faith based groups to address the issue of violence against children in India. Appreciating the contribution of the Bahá'í Community at various level of the society, the Director General requested the office to lead this inter-faith initiative. The office is exploring with number of faith-based organizations and faith leaders to discuss how to create a violence free society for the children in India.

The office also participated in the discussion and contributes to the National Plan of Action for Children 2016 of Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India.

III. Equality of Women and Men

In the past, the office gave attention to a number of issues related to this discourse: the development of the girl child, ending violence against women in families and societies, education and empowerment of women, and partnership between men and women. The office also organized series of seminars on these and related issues in collaboration with other like-minded organizations, inviting government functionaries, United Nations agencies, academics, university students, media and NGO representatives. These social spaces allowed the office to contribute to the advancement of thought at two levels—process and content. At the level of process, it opened space to explore social reality together, consult, and build common understanding. At the level of content, the office introduced ideas inspired by the Bahá'í teachings.



The office had the opportunity to participate in a seminar titled, *Wings to Fly – Celebrating the Girl Child* organized by All India Women's Conference on 24th August 2016 where Mrs. Maneka Gandhi was also present. This gives opportunity to the office to interact with number of individuals from various fields. The office is also in the process of having a seminar on “girl child” in a joint collaboration with All India Women's Education Fund Association (AIWEFA) in April 2017.

The office representative was invited to speak on the occasion of International Women's Day organized by Sulabh Mahila Avom Bal Kalyan Sansthan. The office participated in many events related to empowerment of women, role of youth in addressing gender equality and education of girl child.

Building Relations with government agencies and civil society, including efforts to defend the Bahá'í community from persecution

The office strategically develops its relationship with government ministries and agencies as well as Foreign Embassies. This work is often facilitated and supported through the efforts of individual Bahá'ís. The office representatives were able to meet Smt. Maneka Gandhi, the Minister of Women and Child Development and Mr. Awadh Kumar Singh the newly appointed Secretary of National Foundation for Communal Harmony of Ministry of Home Affairs. The office also met number of faith leaders, representatives of civil society and apprised them about contribution of the Bahá'í Community in the areas of women, children, youth and establishing peace and harmony.

The office representatives participated at reception and cultural programmes organized by the Embassy of the Holy See and Sweden among others.

In addition, the office has been consolidating relations with a coalition of civil society organizations and these relationship building efforts create opportunities to partner on seminars and promoting discourse on role of youth among others.

Defence of the Faith

In observance of the eight anniversary of the arrest and incarceration of seven Bahá'í leaders, the office coordinated an event as part of the global campaign launched by the Bahá'í International Community for the immediate release of the Yaran. Around 35 Local Spiritual Assemblies participated in this campaign by organizing devotional gatherings in their communities.



The office also coordinated a tweet storm by inviting the Bahá'ís and their friends to follow the official twitter. This activity was coordinated by the office with the assistance of two collaborators. While taking up this challenging task, the office realized that twitter as social media was not a very popular platform for the Bahá'í youth in India and initial efforts were directed towards educating friends



across the country in setting up twitter accounts and its use in expressing their thoughts and opinion. Friends across India tweeted using #ReleaseBahai7Now and also requested the Prime Minister and influential twitterati including human rights activists, members of parliament, journalists and artists to urge Iran to release the seven Bahá'ís.

Around 100 Youth of Delhi gathered near the mural on 28 May 2016 to be part of the campaign on Education is not a Crime initiated by Maziar Bahari, to support the Bahá'í youth in Iran who are being denied of access to higher education.

A special prayer service was also organized at the Bahá'í House of Worship on 15th May 2016 where around three hundred youth and adults converged to pray for the Yaran and to ease the persecution of the Bahá'ís in Iran.

The office also apprised the government on various conditions of the Bahá'ís in Iran and also shared relevant documents with them.

Strengthening the Bahá'í presence on the Web

The office maintained its presence on the Worldwide Web through periodic updates on www.bahai.in and <https://twitter.com/BahaiOPAIndia>. The office also initiated its presence on Speakingtree.in (online version) of the Times of India. This has provided greater visibility to the Bahá'í inputs on contemporary social issues. The office responds to the regular queries posted on the site by the visitors and continues with regular content upload in all the portals of www.speakingtree.in

PUBLIC INFORMATION ACTIVITIES AT THE BAHÁ'Í HOUSE OF WORSHIP

• *Relations with media*

In general our contact with the media has been short and brief. The strategy paper of 20th October 2014 reminded us of, and reinforced the approach of reaching out to like-minded journalists by suggesting, “ *Identifying sections of the media who share a concern for the well-being of humanity and gradually cultivating relations with them, building mutual trust and respect and exchanging thoughts and ideas as part of productive and evolving conversation*”.

In light of the above guidance, the office has made efforts in building relations with media and as a result made new contact with few like-minded journalists.

The office continued deepening its relations with the senior editor of the Times of India, Speaking Tree column and hence, the office is being invited for various events organized by Times of India and our events are also being covered in print section of Times of India and uploaded on Speaking Tree website.

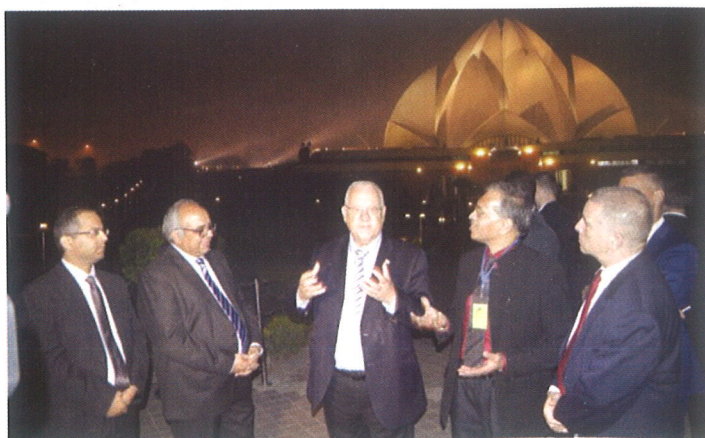
There were a number of articles and press releases published in print and electronic media related to the persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran and various events organized by the office. *The Times of India, The Hindu, Hindustan Times, WION news and Punjab Kesri* covered this news.

Special visits

The office at the Information Centre of the Bahá'í House of Worship arranged special visit for dignitaries from different countries and the groups from various schools and universities.

Among notable visits to the Bahá'í House of Worship are the following:

- State visit of President of Israel, H.E. Reuven Rivlin, 1st lady Mrs. Nechama Rivlin and accompanying delegation.
- Ambassador of Bhutan, H.E. Vetsop Namgyel and his wife,
- Ambassador of Bulgaria , H.E. Mr. Petko Doykov and his wife
- Ambassador of Peru, H.E. Mr. Jorge Juan Cantaneda Mendez
- Ambassador of Poland, H.E. Mr. Tomasz Lukaszuk
- Ambassador of China, H.E. Luo Zhaohui, Charge d'affaires and Minister of Chinese Embassy in India, Mr. Liu Jinsong
- Mr. C. Vijayabhaskar, the Health Minister of Tamil Nadu and his family.



- Delegation from Turkey, United States, China, Belgium, Taiwan, Bahrain and Sri Lanka.

Four International schools experienced special visit to the Bahá'í House of Worship. These visits consist of tour of the Information Centre, viewing of the film- Jewel in the Lotus, Q & A and followed with a visit to the Prayer Hall. This helps the students take back with them an enhanced experience of their visit to the House of Worship.

Cultural Events

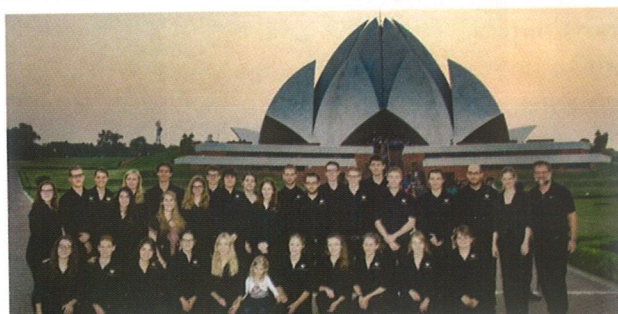
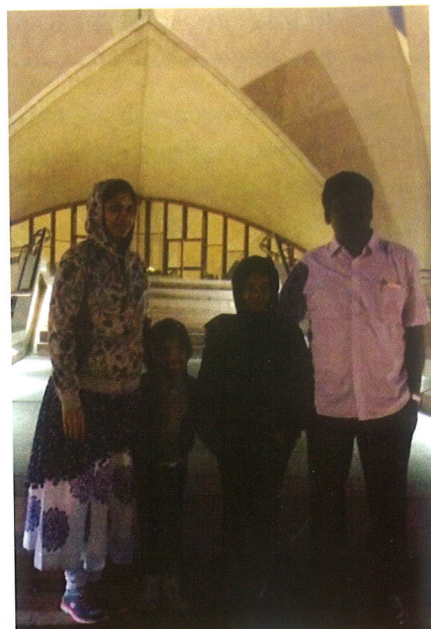
There have been numerous events this year planned by the office at the House of Worship in alliance with other organizations. Eight cultural events took place under the banner of Unity Concert and One Ocean series. These events are organized to suit both the general public and people of capacity. Each Concert has a theme which is aligned with

Bahá'í teachings for a global vision and connects us with great spiritual truths using the arts.

One of the themes of the Unity concert was "Spiritual Voices of Women" which highlighted the most significant Bahá'í principle of equality of women and men. The purpose of the concert was to shed light on the verses of several women poets across time, faith traditions and cultures. In most cultures women have not held positions of religious authority on par with men. But they have never been silent. Different forms of art i.e. classical dance, music and poetry reading were used to represent the poets by enlisting the support of various women artists known by the office. Poetry from different traditions such as Hindu, Buddhist, Islam, Sufi, Christian, Jewish and Bahá'í was presented. Prominent women artists of Delhi were invited to perform and they were delighted to be associated with this event. Tahireh's poem which was recited by a Bahá'í friend in Persian made a profound impact at the event. This event was covered by the Speaking Tree supplement of Times of India where it was featured prominently.

Special events

- The office organized an event titled, "*Declamation – a dialogue on social issues*" on International Peace Day on 21st September 2016 at the Auditorium of Information Centre of the Bahá'í House of Worship. This was a joint collaboration of the office with Ramanujan College. The purpose was to provide youth with a social platform where they can express their ideas and



to raise consciousness about their role as global citizens working towards the betterment of society.

- On the occasion of the official visit of Mr. Erik Solheim, Under Secretary General of United Nations and Executive Director of Environment Programme, the office organized a Public Lecture on *“Faith and Environment at the Bahá’í House of Worship on 5th October 2016*. This event gave the office an opportunity to invite the media and various organisations working in the field of environment to the House of Worship and engage with them.



- The office also organized a talk by Mr. Vasu Mohan on the theme, *“Six Radical Teachings of Gender Equality that will Transform the World” on 21st October 2016* at the Bahá’í House of Worship.
- In honour of the Chief Justices from more than 50 countries visiting India, the office on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly organized an event at the Bahá’í House of Worship on 9th November 2016. This event also gave opportunity to the office to build and strengthen its relation with Foreign Embassies.

BAHÁ'Í HOUSE OF WORSHIP

In the words of our Beloved Master Abdu'l-Bahá, "Not only does the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar have an effect upon those who built it but upon the whole world.... **Whosoever arises for the service of this building shall be assisted with great power from His Supreme Kingdom, and upon him spiritual and heavenly blessing shall descent which shall fill his heart with wonderful consolation and enlighten his eyes by beholding the Glorious and Eternal God.**"

During the past year, the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar hosted several gatherings and seminars namely gathering for network of Learning Sites in Asia, seminars for the Resource Persons of the Learning Sites in South Asia, the Preparation for Social Action (PSA) Seminars, the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity (ISGP - Hindi Seminar), Conference for the newly appointed Auxiliary Board members and several Institute Campaigns for Delhi Cluster held throughout the year. Junior Youth Camps and Children's Festivals were also held on the premises.

The Celebration of the Birth Anniversaries of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh for Delhi Cluster were held at the Temple. Over 4000 attended the celebrations on the first day and a little over 2500 on the second.

The Mashriqu'l Adhkar of the Indian Subcontinent - the mother Temple of Asia - not only welcomes over 15,000 visitors daily but is also increasingly serving as a spiritual center for the surrounding neighbourhoods. Its contribution to the transformation of children, junior youth, youth and entire families is gaining strength and becoming more evident with each passing year.

Volunteers: The House of Worship continues to face an acute shortage of volunteers. The months with the maximum number of visitors to the Temple – coincided with the lowest number of volunteers. In June 2016 the House of Worship received 6,05,090 visitors and there were only 6 volunteers. The same pattern is repeated in October and November. During October there were 7,17,608 visitors and only 8 volunteers and in November there were 4,86,277 visitors with 9 volunteers. This lack of volunteers places a heavy burden on the few who struggle to maintain the crowd. The House of Worship appeals to all the Regional/State Councils to send volunteers to the Temple on a regular basis.

Total Number of Visitors & School Groups: Total number of visitors to the Temple from January to December 2016 is 55,38,698. This is the highest number since the Dedication of the House of Worship. The number would have been higher, however, due to Security reasons the Delhi Police asked the Temple to close the Temple gates on a few occasions this year. On 2nd



October, the total number of visitors up to 3:00 p.m. was 80,309. On the 8th day of Dussehra there were 98,523 visitors up to 3:00 p.m. Hence unprecedented number of visitors came to the Temple this past year. On 1 January 2017 the count totaled to 93,359 visitors. As the flow of the crowd was very heavy, we may assume that perhaps 10% of visitors were not accounted for. If we add 10% to this number, we can estimate that on 1 January 2017 – 1,02,695 visitors came to the Temple.

From February 2016 to January 2017 – 2862 School groups visited the House of Worship. This involved 2,37,072 students and 14,802 teachers.

The above statistics raises several questions. How can we warmly welcome a growing number of visitors? How many seekers are the volunteers able to have a “meaningful conversation” with? What material can be presented to School students and Teachers? How can the Prayer Services touch the heart of the listeners? Are the introductory pamphlets presented to seekers at the Temple adequate?

Construction of Educational Facility: In a letter dated, 28 January 2013 addressed to the National Spiritual Assembly of India, the Universal House of Justice stated: “**Reports of the activities taking place in Delhi, especially in areas around the Temple, in which large numbers of young people have become engaged in the advancement of their neighbourhoods have brought great delight to the House of Justice. In addition, given such significant achievements, the Delhi cluster is envisioned as a future site for the dissemination of learning regarding the junior youth spiritual empowerment programme**”.

In the same communication, the Universal House of Justice asked the National Spiritual Assembly of India to initiate the process of obtaining approval to construct a building, either on the premises of the House of Worship or in an adjoining location, that could cater to the present and future needs arising from the above activities. In this context, the National Spiritual Assembly directed the Temple Committee, in early 2014, to begin the process of obtaining approval from concerned authorities to erect a suitable building on the premises of the House of Worship. In compliance with the desire of the Supreme Body and direction of the National Assembly, the Temple committee immediately initiated the process. The lengthy process was completed and final approval obtained in November 2016. Following this approval, the laying of the foundations of the new building named “Educational Centre” at the House of Worship, began on 19th January 2017 with casting of the first column.



The built up area of the Educational Centre will be approximately 2500 square meters over two levels. The new building will accommodate 200 participants for junior youth campaigns as well as other educational and training programmes which regularly take place at the House of Worship. The new building as well as having dormitories and rooms for the participants, also has facilities for meetings and offices for the various agencies functioning at the House of Worship.

At the time of writing this report in early March, the progress of the construction was well underway. The attached photographs reflect the level of progress in early March 2017

New Developments in Maintenance:

Maintenance of the facilities at the Temple is carried out daily and the work is completed by the maintenance team are too numerous to mention. Some of the major projects undertaken are as follows:

The **Solar Panels** installed over a year ago continue to function effectively resulting in savings of Rs. 1.5 lakhs in electricity bills each month. Plans are underway to install additional Solar Panels.

Periphery road: A service road along the boundary wall of the premises of the House of Worship, which amounts to a total of 3 kms is being constructed.

Security Tower: An additional Security Tower is being constructed at the South West side of the premises. This is in conformity with the Police requirements.

Irrigation: An old irrigation line which has become rusted over the past 30 years has been replaced with a new HDPE (High Density Polyethylene) pipes. This covers the entire green area of the premises.

Stage Lights and Sound System of Information Centre: The stage lights and sound system of the main auditorium of the Information Centre have been repaired and upgraded.

The **fountains** in the pools around the Temple were repaired.

A new **shed** was constructed for Garden equipment near the Nursery.

The **Sewage Treatment Plant** which is now 4 years old was over hauled and painted.

The construction site was **barricaded by tin sheets**. A large amount of funds were saved as the Contractor had quoted a high price and our Maintenance Department completed the same work in 10% of the cost quoted by the Contractor.

Prayer Services & Choir: To enhance the quality of the Prayer Services and the Choir, the House of Worship invited friends talented in the field of music composition and chanting. Mr. Prem Singh, Aman Mohajer, Shobit Raj, Prakash Basyal, Saif Bartar, Ms. Soni, Sunrender Kumar, Satya Prakash and ofcourse Jafar participated in this "Music Composition Seminar" from 1 to 5 March at the House of Worship. Each day they put to music the Hidden Words and Prayers. They specially focused on prayers revealed by The Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. These new compositions will be used not only at the Temple during the Prayer Services but throughout the Hindi speaking regions for the Bicentennary Celebrations this year in October. It is envisioned that this group will gradually expand and meet on a regular basis – at least twice a year and take this process forward.

Horticulture:

600 plants of Putranjiva were planted twice along the outside of the boundary wall facing the main road. This hedge is very difficult to manage as it is outside our premises and the public constantly damage it.

In the previous years the total area of the gardens covered by **grass** was 60%. This year 90% of the area of the Temple is covered by grass.

The **hedges** on the premises which totals to 1000 running meters require to be trimmed every 15 days.

Due to abundant availability of water due to the **Sewage Treatment Plant** the grass is watered constantly and hence requires daily mowing. The Temple acquired 2 ride-on lawn mowers and a tractor and trolley.



Seasonal flowers are planted in the prime area and planters every 3 months. This has ensured that the gardens have colour throughout the year.

First Day Cover: The Chief Postmaster General of Delhi Postal Circle issued a Special Cover for the District Level Philately Exhibition held on 19-20 January 2017. The First Day Cover depicts the Bahá'í Lotus Temple. At the back of the envelope is printed "The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens" – Bahá'u'lláh"

National Gaurav Award 2016 was presented to the Lotus Temple by Minister of Minority Affairs, Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi in a program held in Vigyan Bhavan on 25 February 2017.



SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

BAHÁ'Í ACADEMY, PANCHGANI

Introduction to the Bahá'í Academy:

The Bahá'í Academy (www.bahaiacademy.org) "is part of a network of Bahá'í and Bahá'í-inspired efforts around the world which are all working to promote social justice and economic development." (OSD, July 2006, Bangkok). The Academy is an educational institution engaged in research and action in the field of value education for institutions of higher learning.

In year 2000 the Bahá'í Academy initiated a programme for colleges and universities on theme Education in Universal Human Values. The focus of its educational programme is teachers, students and administrative staff members of higher academic institutions. Its emphasis is development of moral capabilities and abilities that are needed for almost any positive action at personal and social levels. The programme consists of a number of courses that are offered at Foundation, Certificate, Diploma and Advanced Diploma Levels. They are offered through various modes such as face-to-face, distance, online and blended modes.

At least five courses of the Academy have been approved as university courses by the concerned authorities while a number of modules have been included in degree and post graduate programmes of some universities. These modules and courses are all action oriented to build participants skills and abilities, nurture their spiritual and moral qualities and develop their healthy attitudes. In addition to the contact sessions, they consist of home activities, practical assignments and a final community project called Service Learning Activities. The sessions are interactive and engaging, offering the participants a very joyful and rich learning experience. Some of the courses that are offered by the Bahá'í Academy as extra-curricular or Add-on courses are "Fostering Personal Development & Social Progress", "Leadership for Change", "ASHA: Abilities, Skills and Healthy Attitudes", and "Value Education: Fundamentals".

Besides collaborating with several universities, together with five other top institutions of higher learning, the Bahá'í Academy became a founding member of the Indian Consortium for Educational Transformation, I-CONSENT, and its "Param Intervarsity". Currently it is offering an online Post Graduate Diploma of e-Education for a Digital Society (P.G.DEEDS).

Teams of the Academy Resource Persons in Panchgani, Pune and Bangalore are engaged in planning, implementing and evaluating their activities. The Bahá'í Academy is now a Recognized Institution of one of the top Indian universities.

Activities Conducted During 2016-17:

Training Courses for teachers, students and administrative staff members:

During the year about 35 long term and short term training workshops were held for the teachers, students and admin staff members of the institutions affiliated to five universities. There were about 4000 participants who benefitted from these Courses and programmes. They included 280 teachers and administrative staff members and 3750 students from various faculties: education,



pharmacy, engineering, computer science, medicine, arts, commerce, science, etc., institutions of higher learning.

The longer training workshops included training of twenty education counsellors who mentor the B.Ed students who have studied the Bahá'í Academy's module as part of their B.Ed course, orientation on the first module of one of the Academy's courses of fifty two faculty members of a collaborating college along with their administrative staff members, a refresher course on consultation and conflict resolution skills for twenty teachers from one of our B.Pharm collaborating colleges, a Teachers' Orientation Workshop at the Bahá'í Academy where twenty five teachers from several colleges attended, four refresher workshops for 140 administrative staff members from a university and a Pharmacy College, and a workshop for thirty NSS programme Coordinators held at the Bahá'í Academy. All these courses and workshops were of a few days duration.



Four batches of students, about one hundred in number, from a B.Pharm and a B.C.A. College completed various modules of the Bahá'í Academy course "Fostering Personal Development & Social Progress" followed by practical assignments and Service Learning Activities/Community Projects in local communities.

There were also shorter workshops for the Post Graduation and Under Graduation students of two universities. They included five workshops of 2 days duration each for 150 P.G. students on Human Rights and Human Values, 200 Community College students divided in groups. Introductory one day workshops on Education in Universal Human Values for approximately 1500 students from fifteen colleges of different clusters, three short remedial classes for 100 P.G. students, and a UGC Sponsored Winter School for 70 College Teachers. The Bahá'í Academy presented some themes during the Winter School. Among the colleges where training workshops were held there were engineering colleges and colleges of education that organized short FDPs, training of their administrative staff members and students for over three hundred participants. Over one hundred students and teachers of a number of colleges visited the Bahá'í Academy for an interaction with the Academy staff. These shorter workshops resulted into over 100 local projects that were initiated and carried out by the students in local communities. These action oriented projects were related to universal human values and human rights.

In addition this, about 700 B.Ed students took one module of the Bahá'í Academy's course as a requirement for their university course.



Approval of the Bahá'í Academy courses as University Courses:

One of the Universities approved four courses of the Bahá'í Academy under its faculty of Social Sciences. These courses are as follows: Fostering Personal Development & Social Progress" at Diploma and Advanced Diploma levels, Leadership for Change, ASHA: Abilities, Skills and Healthy Attitudes, Research Methodology Course; and Refresher Course for administrative staff members.

Another University included two modules of the Bahá'í Academy course as audit course for all its PG students decided to relaunch the Academy's Certificate Course on Value Education: Fundamentals.

Webcasting:

Two faculty members of the Bahá'í Academy were invited by a collaborating university to audio record 30 lectures for University's Web-radio. These talks are made available through the University's web-radio for the benefit of the post graduate students who have taken the 'Universal Human Values' modules as a requirement of their university course. It is expected that a large number of students will benefit from these talks that are supplemented by handouts and other study materials.

MoUs:

During this period four colleges signed Memorandum of Understanding with the Bahá'í Academy to implement Education in Universal Human Values programme in their institutions. They included one college of education, one college of architecture, and two colleges of Arts, Commerce and Science. It is to be noted that the same Education College was inspected by the peer team of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) which is the authority for quality assessment of higher academic institutions in India, and was awarded 'A' grade. The College has warmly acknowledged Academy's contribution for this achievement.

Research:

Since research is one of the twin functions of the Bahá'í Academy, during the period of this report the Academy organized two international research events at the Bahá'í Academy in June 2016 and Feb. 2017: An 'International Conference on Universal Human Values' and an 'International Seminar on Tourism and Sustainable Development with special reference to Universal Human Values'. The objectives in organizing these two events were twofold:

1. To promote research practices among teachers, PG and UG students on themes related to the Bahá'í Academy's focus; and
2. To provide a platform to share the learning by the participants—college principals, HODs, teachers, P.G. and U.G. students -- and expand the network of the Academy's collaborators.

The first International Conference on Universal Human Values' was organized in collaboration with the Education Department of one of the Universities and the International Institute of Organizational Psychological medicine (IIOPM), Australia. The Conference attracted 233 participants from 14 universities. A total of 85 research papers presented from eight countries and 14 Indian universities. The sub-themes of the conference focused on the need for Education in Universal Human Values from various perspectives: educational, environmental, social, scientific and economic perspectives. The Conference was attended by two Vice-Chancellors, and three former Vice-Chancellors among other eminent academicians. Two publications of the Bahá'í Academy were released during the Conference by the dignitaries. They included a book, 'Education In Action: Stories of Service Learning Activities and Projects carried Out by the Students of Education in Universal Human Values in their Extended families & Communities'

(in English); and Bahá'í Academy's theme song (in Marathi) by distinguished Indian musicians and classical singers.

One of the other events was the 'International Seminar of Tourism and Sustainable Development' with special reference to Universal Human Values organized in collaboration with the Geography Department of one of the collaborating colleges. The Seminar attracted almost 70 teachers, Resource Persons, and few students from several institutions of higher learning that included 5 Universities in India, 2 Universities from Europe and USA, and 16 colleges from the states of Maharashtra and Karnataka. About 60 papers and 3 international presentations were submitted for the Seminar. The Seminar was also attended by dignitaries including a Vice-Chancellor, a Mayor, several Principals and former Principals, and two dignitaries from the U.K. and Australia.

The Academy staff members undertook a number of research projects related to its programme. They included a project on 'Understanding the youth and their challenges', 'Tourism and Sustainable Development with special reference to Universal Human Values', and eight other researches that were presented by the Bahá'í Academy staff at the International Conference in June 2016.

The above activities have greatly enhanced the institutional capacity of the Bahá'í Academy to engage in research in the field of value education as one of its functions.

Publications:

- Education in Action: Stories of Service Learning Activities and Projects carried out by the students of education in Universal Human Values in their extended families & communities (in English)
- Bahá'í Academy's theme song in Marathi
- Bahá'í Academy Songs in English
- Workbook on two modules in 'Self-Instructional-Format' for students enrolled in distance education
- Recording of 30 Radio Talks for webcasting on one of the University Websites for the benefit of the students who take the Academy's Courses and Modules
- A set of five brochures of the University Approved Courses
- Three volumes of the Souvenir of the first International Conference on Universal Human Values
- Mentor's Energizer Digital Bulletin



Institutional Capacity Building:

Academy Programme Officers undertook intensive travelling to various institutions to introduce the Academy Programme to their authorities and conduct training for the students. They also provided guidance to the students for planning, implementing and evaluating community projects after completing one or more modules of the Bahá'í Academy. These projects related to various themes such as Human Rights, Generic Medicines, gender equality, etc. Two youths have also joined the Academy as a Programme Officer and a Programme Supervisor, adding to the Academy's vibrant team of co-workers.

BARLI DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE FOR RURAL WOMEN

The overall goal of Barli Development Institute for Rural Women (BDIRW) is to initiate and build the process of sustainable community development through empowerment of young rural and tribal women to become agents of social change. The programmes of the Institute are focused on the empowerment of women by training them to further develop themselves, their families and also gain capacity and skills to contribute towards the development of their own communities in the areas of literacy, vocational skills, health and hygiene, environmental and gender mainstreaming. The Institute bedecked with organic farms, efficient sewage water treatment plant, solar power generation system, solar cookers and solar driers also stands for self-sufficiency in terms of environmental conservation and protection.

Community Volunteers

During the six-month training course, the Community Volunteers were trained in literacy skills (reading, writing and simple arithmetical skills), health & hygiene, environmental education, and personal & community development. They were also trained in income generating and vocational skills: Cutting & Tailoring & Solar Food Processing etc. At the end of the training programme interested and eligible trainees appeared for Cutting & Tailoring examination from the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), an institution under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

Grassroots Trainers

It is generally school dropouts between 8-10th standards that are selected as facilitators of groups for peer Tutoring and trained as Grassroots Trainers. In the initial stages of their training, they followed the same curriculum as the Community Volunteers. In addition, they advanced their vocational skills and developed their abilities as trainers by helping facilitate classes for the Community Volunteers and functioned as peer tutors. They developed the necessary skills to use the Institute's curriculum to conduct classes and to establish education and health programmes in their own communities after their return. Some of these trainees also appeared for Cutting & Tailoring examination from the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), an institution under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. These training programs are residential and entirely free of cost to the trainees. The Institute provides room and board, as well as health check-ups and medications.

The Institute had trained 233 community and grassroots trainers during the year 2016. In addition to community volunteers and grassroots trainers, there are 31 women-trainees who have stayed back for higher education (10th, 12th and graduation) while staying in Barli Institute's campus.

Activities throughout the year :

1. Celebration and Observance of important International UN days:

The Barli Development Institute organized events throughout the year on days of International importance such as the International Women's Day, World Environment day and International Literacy Day. The national Independence Day and the Republic Day was also celebrated with great zeal. On all occasions, top



government officials, doctors, educationalists and corporate heads were invited to witness the progress of the trainees sharing the vision and mission of the Institute.

2. **Parents meetings:** Parents and family meets were organized (twice in the year) for both the training sessions once in March and the other August 2016. On both the occasions nearly 300 participants stayed back at the Institute for two three days and were overwhelmed to see the progress of their daughters. They were amazed at the number of skills (reading and writing, cutting and tailoring, environmental and health knowledge) which their daughters had acquired within a short period. The spiritual environment of the Institute inspired the parents to send more trainees at the Institute.



3. **Visitor groups :**

- Several groups of school and college students visited throughout the year to learn about women empowerment, solar technology and organic farming.
- Groups of farmers from different districts of the country visited the Institute to get insights into organic farming.
- Representatives from various NGO's visited the Institute (e.g. NIPPCD)
- More than 50 international delegates from 19 countries visited the Institute to learn about solar cookers used in the Institute.
- US embassy representatives visited the Institute for knowing about women's empowerment

4. **Field visits:**

- a. Field tours and visits were organized to the tribal villages for witnessing the progress made by trainees, and their tailoring shops were visited. Systematic evaluation was conducted to assess the progress of trainees when they returned to their homes.
- b. Visit of Mona foundation for evaluating the progress of trainees in their villages



5. **Other events.**

- a. Expert lectures were held by eminent doctors, organic agriculture specialists, educationalists, corporate leaders from time to time.
- b. The graduation ceremony was organized for both the training batches. Certificates and trophies were presented to the successful candidates.
- c. Health check-up camps were organized for the trainees.
- d. Solar organic lunch was organized for the supporters and friends of the Institute

6. Achievements :

- a. **Award:** Barli Institute was awarded Gold Certification award for organizational transparency, efficiency and effectiveness which was imparted by GuideStar India in September 2016.
- b. **UN-FAO's GFAR membership:** International recognition by Food and Agriculture Organisation of United Nations: Mr Yogesh Jadhav (Chief Operating Officer of Barli Institute) has been appointed (honorary) on the Global Steering Committee of the FAO-UN's Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR) (for year 2017-2020); with Barli Institute being designated as a partner organization of GFAR. Mr Jadhav was invited at FAO headquarters in Rome to participate in the first Steering committee meeting (Rome, 8-9 February 2017)



7. **Results of NIOS exams:** Results of the trainees in the National Institute of Open Schooling has been 100 percent again for the current year.

9. **Admissions (intake in May and November):** The response to the admissions at Barli Institute has been very satisfactory and overwhelming. The admissions for the current (111th) batch was completed within a single day - with new trainees coming for admission even one day prior to the announced dates.



9. Solar cooker training workshops were organized at end of each six-month course in which the women-trainees learnt the assembling, maintenance and use of SK14 solar cookers.

NEW ERA TEACHER TRAINING CENTRE (NETTC), PANCHGANI

New Era Teacher Training Centre (NETTC) is a Bahá'í inspired Agency which trains youth as Promoters of Community Wellbeing & Primary Teachers and Pre-primary Teachers. Its vision, values and curriculum are based on the teachings and principles of the Bahá'í Faith.

One of the objectives of NETTC is to prepare teachers who are simultaneously the promoters of community well being, capable of achieving the dual purpose of material and spiritual development for themselves and their communities. **The other objective** is to help the trainees to initiate and sustain a steady process of community building in the surrounding localities and nearby schools of NETTC and wherever they reside after their graduation.

The teachers trained by NETTC have been able to prove themselves befitting for both rural as well as urban settings. Besides being successfully employed and self employed they have willingly contributed their part towards the process of community building in various parts of the country. There has always been a first-rated demand of NETTC's graduates as teachers for primary and pre-primary levels at the privately run schools in the country. The quality of NETTC's training makes its students imbued with service to the humanity. Besides being successful teachers of the primary academic subjects NETTC's graduates are skilled in imparting Bahá'í moral educational curriculums to children and junior youths and consequently become preferred teachers of their students wherever they serve. Its graduates always cherished their empowerment as well as motivation of service to humanity as their most precious treasures.

For the academic session 2016-17 **Admission** was open to all candidates above 18 years with a minimum 12th standard degree (Science, Arts or Commerce) with simple formalities. In all 158 enrollments were received comprising of 49 in Pre-Primary Teacher Training (one year course only for women) and 73 for the 1st year and 36 for the 2nd year

of the "Promoter of Community Wellbeing & Primary Teacher Training" course. Though the minimum required qualification for enrollment was Higher Secondary pass, youths with higher qualifications such as B.Sc., B.A., M.A., B. Ed., and B.E. had also sought for admission. There were enrollments from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Tripura, and from the neighboring country, Sri Lanka. The 158 enrollments consisted of 90 male trainees and 68 female trainees.



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During the last academic year (2015-16) 33 individuals had graduated as primary teachers and 33 had graduated as pre-primary teachers. Almost all the graduates were able to secure jobs for themselves through a **Campus Interview Program** organized on 27 March 2016 where 17 schools from Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat had participated. Not of the institution but the student's benefit and progress was always prioritized. This year is likely to be organized towards the later part of March 2017.

Over and above special considerations were given to economically challenged students irrespective of region, background and religion. With a view to helping the deserving economically weaker students NETTC had extended Interest Free Loan (IFL) facility to 32 students during the current academic year. The beneficiary of this facility could continue his/her

training by remitting 50% of the total course fees during the training period. The other 50% was granted as IFL which the trainee would pay back within two years from the completion of his/her training in easy monthly installments. After the approval of the IFL the deserving trainees had signed indemnity bonds to pay back the loan without any interest within two years of their graduation from NETTC. The selection of the beneficiaries was entirely at the discretion of NETTC Administration In consultation with the other institutions and agencies in the country. During the last academic year (2015- 2016) 23 deserving trainees had availed this facility.

The curriculum has been carefully designed to address both spiritual and material dimensions of human existence. It is comprised of: The Ruhi Institute Book 1, 2, 3 (Grade 1, 2 & 3) and 5, Ruhi Kinder (4 modules), Junior Youth Empowerment program (9 books). The PSA (Preparation for Social Action) Program has been a vital component of NETTC's curriculum. 16 units of this program in the areas of Math, language, Science, Technology and service to community were imparted to the trainees during their two-year training course. Besides this the Hidden Gems Program, the English Program (Basic and Advanced), the Teacher's Preparation Materials (6 different modules), the Primary Academic Subject books, the Intensive Teaching Practice, are the other components of the training curriculum.

Trainees as usual undergo one to two years of intensive study, practice and reflection, uplifting their souls, strengthening their mental faculties, enhancing their knowledge, and enriching themselves with the required skills and capabilities. The magnitude of spiritual and intellectual transformation achieved by each trainee is remarkable and is a source of joy to NETTC. Without fail the entire NETTC family tries to give constant care, attention and provides a healthy, safe and spiritual atmosphere for the very imperative progress of its trainees. **PSA units** in areas of Language, Mathematics, Science, Technology and Service to Community were a part of the core curriculum imparted through reciprocal study, practices and experiments, enhancing and consolidating the knowledge, language efficiency and capabilities of the students related to real life situations.

The Ruhi Institute Materials are the most vital and necessary components of the curriculum of NETTC imparted side by side **the Basic English Program** right from the very outset of the training synchronizing material and spiritual education essential for teachers. Furthermore it was imperative to refining their characters and behavior, rearranging in their minds, their thoughts as well as understanding about several spiritual themes and concepts. For their easy understanding the initial Ruhi books were imparted in their mother tongues as well as in Hindi and Marathi and subsequently in English. As a part of the community building process application of the practice and service components of each of the Ruhi book were carried out through **the Rural Program (RP)**. With immense delight the trainees had initiated and sustained core activities like Regular



Devotional Meetings (once in a month), children and junior youth classes on every Saturday and Sunday (weekly once for 2.5-3 hours) all the year round. Prior to the onset of the Rural Program activities village authorities were visited and their consent and cooperation was solicited. Parents of children and junior youth were being visited by the trainees at regular

intervals assessing about the impact of the moral programs on their children as well as having meaningful conversations. The loving visits of the trainees to the parents and their meaningful conversations with them had resulted in a good number of regular devotional meetings (RDMs). The different components of the Rural Programs were greatly appreciated and welcomed by all the surrounding neighborhoods.

The following are the statistical achievements.

Regular Devotional Meeting (RDM)

Communities	Households	Assisting Student	Attendance
20	272	147	1088 approx

Bahá'í Children's Classes (BCC)

BCC	Communities	Classes	Teachers	Children
Grade - 1	13	13	23	103
Grade - 2	08	13	14	62
Grade - 3	04	04	08	19
Total:	17	30	45	184

Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program (JYSEP)

JYSEP	Communities	JYG	Animators	Junior youths
Level 1	09	18	20	83
Level 2	08	10	11	41
Total:	17	28	31	124

Ruhi Kinder (Kinder Math & Science program for children below five years)

Communities	Ruhi Kinder Classes	Teachers	Children
10	18	18	103

To Describe the World (A service component of PSA Program for children in the age group of 3 - 4)

Communities	TDW Classes	Teachers	Children
07	11	12	43

Study Circles (for the parents of the children & junior youths)

Communities	Study Circles	Tutors	Participants
03	03	05	14

School Moral Program (SMP) is yet another space for the trainees to put their learning into practice as well as build up their capacity of imparting the moral programs (BCC and JYSEP) in school settings. This year it was carried out by the second year students in a network of 6 local English Medium Schools of Panchgani who were cooperative enough to extend 2.5 to 3 hours on every Tuesday mornings throughout the year, readily bought all the necessary materials for their students and constantly appreciated the positive impact the programs had on their children and teachers. Below are the related statics

BCC	Schools	Classes	Teachers	Children
Grade - 1	6	6	9	168
Grade -2	6	6	9	126
Grade -3	6	7	10	199
Total:	6	19	28	493

JYSEP	Schools	JYG	Animators	Junior youths
BOC & GOH	3	4	6	126
SOF & WSP	1	1	1	24
SOF & LAE	1	1	1	21
Total:	3	6	8	171

The Rural Program and the School Moral Program has been intensified with precision. Up gradation of all classes were ensured. Befitting measures for their sustenance were made certain. Quality was given utmost importance and was upheld through close, harmonious and constant accompaniment to all student-teachers and animators in their preparation, reflection and presentation sessions. Service, arts & crafts and extracurricular activities integral to JYSEP were carried out constantly and enjoyed by all. Parent's presentations and gatherings, Bal and Kishor Melas were organized with greater success.

6 Week Intensive Teaching Practice is yet another avenue of practice for teaching academic subjects, Hidden Gems Program (for kindergarten students) and intensifying the School Moral Program. This year the teaching practice has been scheduled on 16 January to 24 February 2017

where 32 Primary and 40 preprimary trainees shall have their intensive teaching practice. It will be on every working day during the entire 6 Week Intensive Teaching Practice in a network of 15 schools in Panchgani during which they will practice teaching methods and classroom discipline management through precise lesson plans. The trainees will be constantly guided, accompanied and encouraged by their respective instructors.



During the current academic year (2016-17) NETTC successfully organized two **Youth Gatherings**, one on 13 – 16 December 2016 for its own trainees and the other on 11 – 15 January 2017 for the youth of host schools of its School Moral Program participated by 110 1st year trainees of NETTC and 64 youths from 4 schools respectively. Immense learning was drawn from these two Youth Gatherings. The NETTC trainees had studied the Youth Conference material while youths from the schools had studied Ruhi 1 and the Youth Conference material. This was the second successive year for such gatherings and shall be indispensable annual events of NETTC in the years ahead. Besides the youth gatherings 34 second year trainees of NETTC had studied Ruhi 2 and done its relative service components.



The **next Academic Session** shall commence from 1st July 2017. Application forms of the candidates will be accepted till 15th June 2017. The applicants must be of 18 years of age or above with a minimum qualification of +2 Science, Arts or Commerce. Both male and female candidates are eligible for **Promoter of Community Wellbeing & Primary Teacher Training (2 year)** course whereas for **Pre-primary Teacher Training (1 year)** only female candidates are eligible to apply. The interested candidates may contact @ 02168-240642 or 02168-240342 for further information.

Please visit NETTC's website: www.nettcindia.org

Facebook: New Era Teacher Training Centre

NEW ERA HIGH SCHOOL- PANCHGANI, MAHARASHTRA

"Let your vision be world-embracing rather than confined to your own self". This profound statement, which raises the call to humanity to become thoroughly imbued with the consciousness of the oneness of humankind rising above lesser loyalties and selfish interests, is part of the vision of New Era High School. Building in new generations the capacities and capabilities to transform this world is one of the main purposes of education. In this context, New Era sees itself as an educational institution learning to build the capacity of children, junior youth, and youth to become protagonists of positive change in their societies by applying scientific methods and spiritual principles to help in building an ever-advancing civilization.

Established in 1945, New Era is located in the hill-station of Panchgani, Maharashtra, nestled in the green environs of the Sahayadri Ranges with a view of the valley with river Krishna flowing by. It is a co-educational residential school, following a CBSE curriculum from class 1 to 12 and its student body hails from all corners of India and from several other countries.

A sense of fulfillment filled the hearts of the team serving at New Era High School when an ex-student wrote to her teacher, on securing admission with a scholarship in a university abroad. She writes, *"I have come a long way since that warm wet day when I was just another seventh grader, fidgety and eager for my first junior youth spiritual empowerment programme group to end, so I could go to the dining hall for the short break. It did not seem that important to me five years ago, but as I fill my college applications today and am asked to answer questions regarding community service, a smile lights on my face as I proudly type 'junior youth spiritual empowerment programme' on the computer screen. I am proud that I genuinely did and still do something for those around me, selflessly and without any ulterior motives, all because I was lucky enough to have been introduced to this act of service. Most of us ignore the message on the walls of the main office, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you". I did too, until I started reflecting on what I had done for society. It was this Golden Rule that we have heard so many times in our junior youth classes that made me realise the purpose of my existence. I never seemed like the kind of girl that went out of her way to alleviate the sufferings of the less fortunate but now I understand the importance of these minute values that I learnt back then. Today, when I am faced with various situations, be it as little as helping a friend solve a sum or as big as making a career choice, I involuntarily take the higher road and make a morally right decision that will only propel me further in the path of service. I have grown a lot in the past couple of years. I have learnt to be patient and calm, compassionate and empathetic, and most of it is due to the amazing upbringing and guidance I had during my years at New Era, especially the moral classes. I wanted to let you know that I am extremely grateful for how the junior youth spiritual empowerment programme has shaped me and that whatever the future holds for me, I will try to keep up these values and work for the betterment of this world."*

Imbued with the same spirit of service, five ex-students of New Era High School, who are currently studying in other prestigious universities like Symbiosis, Manipal, and Vellore, joined the class VII camp of 6 days, during their vacation, to conduct the junior youth spiritual empowerment book *Learning About Excellence*. The participation of these ex-students in the preparation before and the reflection after the camp, displayed the sense of purpose that New Era has imbibed in them. Thirteen class XI students also conducted a 6 day camp studying the book *Glimmerings of Hope* for class VI students with whom they are currently animating *Breezes of Confirmation* and *Thinking About Numbers*. These student animators also go to two schools in Panchgani and two neighborhoods to conduct junior youth empowerment groups.

The resolve to nurture the spiritual empowerment programme at New Era has strengthened even more when after the study of Ruhi Book 1 in school, a Ruhi Book 5 camp and a youth gathering, a parent wrote on social media, *"New Era is moulding the students by imparting an education that is a blend of moral values, sense of community spirit and teachings of the modern world. Thank you NEHS for this outstanding experience of learning"*. The three day youth gathering was organized for a hundred and twenty class X students who have already completed Ruhi 1 and Ruhi 5. The facilitators of this youth gathering were four motivated ex-students and a volunteer who has come for 6 months of service. Few of these participants have already begun the study of Ruhi 2, twice a week to enhance their ability to converse meaningfully.



During the year, it was extremely sad to lose Mr. Rayappa Kanamadi, but the fact remains that it brought the New Era family spread far across the globe together in solidarity. There were special gatherings of prayers arranged by ex-students in multiple locations. The spirit of unity and love that was created on Mr. Kanamadi's passing showed the immense contribution of teachers towards the school and life of the students.

A parents gathering for class X parents provided an opportunity to collaborate with them and focus on the role of media from Ruhi 5 and the characteristics of a junior youth. These were parents whose children had moved on to the junior youth spiritual empowerment programme from the Bahá'í children's classes. Also, after a very meaningful Kishore Mela program, parents of class VIII students had a study session on the theme of *"the betterment of the world can be accomplished through pure and goodly deeds, through commendable and seemly conduct."* During their camp in Hyderabad the same class had visited two villages in Kammata and Goleguda near Puthadur. This visit was part of the practice component for the book *To Describe the World*. This was covered by the media on October 8, 2016 by two local newspapers - Enadu and Sakshi.



The newspapers reported about this wonderful visit and the acts of service that the junior youth had been doing in the villages for the past few years during the same camp. Also, small study sessions on education were done with a group of parents from the state of Manipur.

The NASA tour to the USA, in which forty students were able to participate, was organized, providing an opportunity to instill the love of knowledge in them and enabling them to have socio-cultural exposure. A parent noted, *"I can't believe my son is actually in NASA, getting all these wonderful experiences! He used to watch BBC shows on space when he was as little as 5 years old and say he wanted to go to NASA one day. So, so happy!"* As a step towards imparting

scientific knowledge, workshops on rocket launching and the study of biological concepts like DNA were also conducted.

In the context of academic achievements, 100% results were attained for Commerce and Science students. The highest total averages in Science (95.4 %) and Commerce (94.6 %) were the highest in the last 5 years. One student scored 100/100 in Informatics Practices. Thirteen students of Science and twenty three students of Commerce got distinction in their overall percentage. Ten students of Commerce got 95 marks in Accountancy, and twenty nine students in total got above 90 marks in Informatics Practices. In English, Physics, Biology, Informatics Practices, and Accountancy, the average of classes were above 80%. The highest scorer got 96% in class X. Twenty three students out of a hundred and twenty six scored above 90 marks, and seventy four students out of a hundred and twenty six passed with distinction. Further, in a survey of 2016, Education World magazine placed New Era at number 2 amongst co-ed boarding schools in Maharashtra.

Another moment of joy was when on a wonderfully organized sports day, the chief guest, actor Rahul Bose, mentioned to all the parents that on his multiple visits to the New Era campus, he always found the students of school happy and he is glad to be associated with a school which believes that humanity is one family. To enhance the skills of sports, New Era started a new club of archery for students. Also, New Era organised inter-school table tennis, badminton and a cricket tournament which saw a huge turnout from Satara district.



It was extremely inspiring for New Era High School to receive the following message from the Office of Social and Economic Development on hosting a seminar for the Bahá'í inspired schools of India: *"It is heartening to learn of the depth of consultation achieved during the gathering as the participating institutions reflected on various aspects of their endeavours."*

Moreover, New Era witnessed a few other occasions during the year. It was a blessed opportunity to host the national level launch of Ruhi book 10 in August 2016. There was also a collaboration with the University College of Southeast- Norway, as well as an NGO, The Foundation, to study materials on social action and some principles of Bahá'í education.

It is reassuring to note, that the staff of New Era do not only impart true education to the 912 students of New Era, but also to about 80 other children of local schools from vernacular medium in a social action project called Build A Life. The principals of the schools very gladly mentioned that, *"The training offered is so effective that we could not differentiate between the students of New Era and our schools"*. This brings to mind a poem on early adolescence that a youth of class X wrote:

*"The world thinks that we are lazy
And that drives our minds crazy,
They call us incapable. But is it so?
We have a lot of potential
And we just need a chance to show..."*

SOCIETY OF UNIVERSAL LEARNER (SOUL)

Community school program in India

"Community Schools are relatively simple arrangements that seek to respect the educational needs and aspirations of local community."

Community Schools have been established in a variety of settings-ranging from the homes of teachers to spaces commonly used by the community. In rural areas, a villager or even village heads have often donated land to be used to establish the school. These schools operate at the local level and adding each year additional teachers and grade levels. Community schools generally start small-often with single class and focusing all its resources on the children that it serves. Community schools are not viewed as business ventures. As the school grows organically, it increasingly becomes a centre for learning, cultivating a spirit of service and contributing to the development of capacity and the promotion of knowledge for the entire community.

At the heart of the overall approach to promoting community schools is a sound and coherent teacher training program, which continues to evolve as additional experience is gained by "Society of Universal Learner (SOUL)"- a Bahá'í inspired organization in Bihar. A distinguishing feature of the approach to teacher training is the manner in which theory and practice are intertwined. Following the initial training seminar, teachers gain practical experience in starting schools, after which they gather several times during the year for additional theoretical study and to reflect on their experience. The cycle of study, action, reflection, and consultation is then repeated each year. Experience indicates that those who have taught Bahá'í Children's Classes are best prepared to take on the task of initiating a community School.



SOUL is an organization with support and guidance of the Office of Social and Economic Development (OSD) of the Bahá'í World Centre, which conducts seminars/training for those who wish to establish the Community School and orientation workshop for the teacher of tutorial school and school owned by Bahá'í. On the basis of this learning, SOUL now assists other emerging Bahá'í inspired organizations concerned with the promotion of community schools in Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Manipur and West Bengal.

Some Activities of SOUL during the year

❖ *Teacher's Training Seminar:-*

The Teachers Training Seminar aims at assisting individuals to establish pre-school. This year we organized the training with two types of approaches. In Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh we organized the seminar in one phase of one month and in Bihar & West Bengal in two phases of 15 days. During the seminars, the trainee teachers studied the curricular elements and



materials related to pedagogy. They studied and practiced concepts of a positive school environment, aims and spiritual nature of education and methods of teaching. Teachers Training Seminars were organized at Biharsharif, Purulia and Bhopal this year and total 40 youths participated in the seminars.

❖ **Upgrade Training Seminar:-** Between May to July, 2016. The upgrade training seminars were organized at the state level separately for existing community schools teachers. In these seminars 38 participants studied the curriculum of new grade level. They also learned about the key elements of school administration and financial management. The existing teachers shared their experience and insights in these seminars.

❖ **Reflection and Refresher Gatherings:-** State level reflection and refresher gatherings were organized twice this year in each state. At these gatherings the teachers shared their experiences on effective methods of teaching, achievements and challenges during the year. The participants also shared the ongoing relationship with parents and members of their communities.

❖ **Community Meetings:-** One of the distinguishing feature of community school is the relationship built between school and the rest of the community. This process begins even before the training seminar is held and continues over the years as schools develop because by taking an active role in making and implementing decisions about the progress of community school, the community takes charge of its own progress with this vision. Community meetings with members of the local community were organized in Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh and Manipur region. These meetings were supported by the members of various Bahá'í Institutions and agencies of respective state.



❖ **Orientation Workshop:-** A two days orientation workshop organized for the teachers of Bahá'í Inspired Schools of Alouli Cluster in Bihar this year. There were 25 teachers and owner of schools participated in the workshop. In this workshop we start a meaningful conversation on the importance of spiritual education in a school and how they use the BCC and JYSEP materials in their school. Participants studied passages from the Bahá'í Holy Writings on the importance of education. One another three days orientation program organized for the teachers of tutorial schools and coaching centre in Bihar. In this gathering we consulted about the role of a teacher in society. These participants were already having their BCC and JYG. So our main focus on the quality of material and human education.

❖ **Resource Person Gatherings:-** A gathering of resource person of community school program of India was held at Kolkata this year. In this gathering participants shared their experiences and reflected on various line of action. They also shared their achievements and challenges and studied the social action document of the Universal House of Justice. At the end of the gathering all resources person made their plan.

BAHÁ'Í CHAIR FOR STUDIES IN DEVELOPMENT, DEVI AHILYA UNIVERSITY, INDORE, MADHYA PRADESH

During the year 2016-17, the Bahá'í Chair for Studies in Development at the Devi Ahilya Vishwavidhyalaya, Indore, held a series of workshops on the theme of science, religion and development. These workshops involved academicians from various universities and colleges in Indore along with development practitioners, professionals and students. The objective of these workshops was to involve an ever-widening circle of individuals and institutions from the academic and development community in Indore and surrounding areas in a discourse on science, religion and development.

A workshop was organized on the theme 'Science, Religion and Development: Some Aims and Challenges' on 29 March 2016 by the Bahá'í Chair at its premises.

Thirteen academicians, development practitioners and research scholars participated in this workshop. The workshop involved the study of materials prepared by the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity on this subject. Participation in this event greatly stimulated the interest of some of the participants. One among them was the Head of the Department of Sociology at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Indore. As a result of his participation in this program, he welcomed the Bahá'í Chair to collaborate with IIT Indore in having a similar workshop for research scholars at his institution.



Accordingly, on 14 December 2016 a workshop on the theme 'Science, Religion and Development: Seeking a Nexus' was held at the IIT Indore campus. It was organized as a collaboration between the Department of Sociology at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Indore and the Bahá'í Chair. Twenty five individuals participated comprising doctoral students and faculty members mainly from IIT.



The discussion was rich and participatory involving research scholars and faculty members who were deeply interested in understanding the new paradigm of development being proposed. At the end of the program students and faculty of IIT expressed interest to have further collaborative programs of such kind with the Bahá'í Chair on the theme of development.

Two more workshops were held on the theme of Applying Scientific Methods and Spiritual Principles for Addressing India's

Developmental Challenges on 16 January 2017 and 20 February 2017 respectively. These workshops which were organized at the Chair's premises brought together faculty members from various colleges and universities in Indore to reflect on the implications of applying scientific methods and spiritual principles to the particular developmental challenges faced by India.

In the coming year, the Chair will continue to organize such introductory workshops on the theme of Science, Religion and Development. In addition to this, those who have participated in an introductory workshop will be invited for follow-up workshops for more intensive reflection on applications of the ideas of this discourse to focused areas of development such as economic activity, governance, education and technological development.



BAHÁ'Í INSPIRED EDUCATION IN INDIA

Bahá'í School, Tadong (Sikkim)

The past year has been very memorable for the school as it envisaged a lot of happenings. The glimpses of few are reflected in the report. Starting from the Children Classes and JY program in the school, as we all know “**Each child is potentially the light of the world**”, thereby, we consider each child valuable and contribute towards their material and spiritual development.

Classes 1 and 2 are participating in *Grade 1*, Classes 3 to 5 are engaged in *Grade 2*, Classes 6 to 8 the JYSEP texts viz. *Breezes of Confirmation, Glimmerings of Hope, Spirit of Faith* and *Walking the Straight path* and Classes 9 and 10 are doing *Book 1*. The children and JYs are doing very well in these classes and group meetings. They are learning to find the answers of life in spiritual way and they



want to draw the best from their life. They enjoy learning and chanting Bahá'í prayers and songs and have been practicing at home as well. Apart from these they participate in the Naw-Ruz and Ridván celebration in the school. Few of the JYs along with the youths observe Fast during the fasting days and take part in the study of the messages from the Universal House of Justice. The youths also take part in the devotionals and render their services in the clusters as Children Class teachers and Animators.

Our children also take part in other extra-curricular activities with full zeal and bring good fame for the school. For e.g.: Subhojit Datta of Class 8 has bagged the 1st prize in the State Level Art Competition on 22nd Dec'16, he is the only one who is selected for the **National Level** in Delhi on 8th Feb'17. Our Tennis players from the girls' team also bagged the Runners up prize in the **Regional level** in Guwahati. Our school in collaboration with another private school introduced the game of Pickle ball in Sikkim and also participated in the **National level** at Jaipur.

Apart from this, we also train our teachers every year according to the norms of CBSE, in addition to this we also had a **Capacity building programme** for our teachers this year in collaboration with Bahá'í School at Saramsa where **Ruhi Book 1** was studied together. The Bahá'í friends from Sikkim and Darjeeling served as tutors for the same. We are planning to have another phase of the same in February'17 where we want to do **Book 3** with them.

Special spark was added to the year when the Principal of the School, Mrs. Rupa Devi Sharma was awarded the **Best Teachers Award** on 5th Sept'16 by the President of India. She brought good name to the School, the Bahá'í Community and the State. Thereby, she was also felicitated by the Chief Minister of Sikkim.



Lastly, the School served to be the venue of **mass teaching** during the celebration of Naw- Ruz and Ridván where Principals of different private Schools, Lecturers and Principal of colleges of in and around of Sikkim were invited.

Brilliant Stars School (BSS)

BSS carried out number of activities in 2016-17 academic year, which are significant for promoting material and spiritual education among its students as well as in society. In this report, we take an opportunity to highlight some of them:

Structuring Spiritual Program - This year, the school gave more attention to its spiritual program. With the valuable support of Miss Anisa Javanmardi, a volunteer from Panchgani, now Bahá'í Children Class graded books have been introduced in Primary classes, teachers are properly placed in different classes, enough spaces are created for regular reflections and planning, Ruhi 1 is introduced in grade 10 and above all the Spiritual Program Coordinator has appointed to ensure smooth functioning of the program and its impact on the children, school and larger community. It also successfully organized its annual Junior Youth/Youth Camp for grade 7 to 10 to complete their sequence of JYSEP books and remaining lessons of their book on 22nd and 23rd January, 2017, at the school campus.



Ashoka Changemaker School - Brilliant Stars School (BSS) is now an Ashoka Changemaker School! The first school in East Indian region. There are 20 Ashoka Changemaker schools in India and 260 around the world. Ashoka is one of the largest international networks of social entrepreneurs worldwide, with over 3,000 Ashoka Fellows in 70 countries creating large-scale impact through new innovations. The school's contribution toward society through its Service Learning Project, Spiritual Education, and Outreach Program are the key elements to accord it as an Ashoka Changemaker School.

Class X Board Result - The first batch of grade X students brought an outstanding result in the CBSE Board examination in 2015-16. Out of 25 students appeared in examination 9 got 10 CGPA (Cumulative Grade Point Average), total 15 students scored above 9 CGPA and all passed the exam with flying colors. This means 36% of our students got 10 CGPA, which is way above than national average, i.e. 11%.

Outreach Program

- i. **Workshop on Social Action**- From 24th to 26th June, 2016, the 2nd workshop on Social Action was organized in the school, in which teachers from 12 Bahá'í inspired schools' participated in the study of the OSED document on 'Social Action'. The workshop was jointly conducted by Miss. Martha Moghbelpour and Mr. Rahul Thampi (Thailand).



- ii. **Assisting Bahá'í Inspired schools in improving their education system** - At present, the school is working closely with 8 Bahá'í inspired schools located in Tripura, to improve their education system. Two workshops were organized for them in September and December, 2016, at Brilliant Stars School, with a focus on completion of Ruhi book 1 and 3 by 38 teachers and school owners and learning about child-centred teaching practices.
- iii. **Collaborating with other schools and education institute in sharing our professional development and learning modules** - It has also started collaborating with other educational organizations by sharing its resources with them. In this academic year, the school conducted two workshops – one in Kendriya Vidyalaya and another in an Education College situated in Tripura - which were based on the training modules being used in the school.
- iv. BSS received 12 heads of the schools under Govt's schools leadership program. Head of the school from Gumati District made a one day visit to the school on 11 January, 2017, to learn about school's teaching-learning system. During the visit, classroom observation, interaction with teachers and leaders and presentation on service-learning projects were made. They expressed their interest to visit and learn more from our practices in future.



CITY MONTESSORI SCHOOL, LUCKNOW, INDIA

Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures and enable mankind to benefit therefrom.

2016-17 was yet another year rich with tremendous accomplishments for CMS in its efforts at offering holistic education to its over 53,000 wards in 20 campuses.

In its movement towards the intellectual, spiritual, moral and social development of its students, CMS places emphasis on academic studies, acquisition of concepts, knowledge, skills, right qualities and attitudes. It aims at the empowerment of its students to become active protagonists of their own growth and development. To harness the great potential that each one has, CMS has introduced elements in its educational curriculum that meet the needs for all-round development of its wards and staff. Hence CMS programme of education is not just restricted to classrooms but also to service projects as well as to contribution to social discourses. Such participation broadens their horizons and helps them in appreciating the fundamentals of sustainability.

Below is a highlight of some of the efforts made at CMS to reach the dual goals of education namely: individual and social transformation

Academic, curricular and co-curricular strides: 2016-17 has been another extremely successful year for CMS students in terms of their progress and achievements. Students have scaled ever-greater heights in academic, co-curricular, and extra-curricular areas, and the school's staff and management have strained every nerve to expand the opportunities available to students.

Unprecedented success of CMS students in ISC and ICSE Examinations: The ISC and ICSE Board results proved the excellence of CMS students, who have brought unparalleled

laurels to the city and the institution. This year, 5,467 CMS students took ICSE (Class X) and ISC (Class XII) Board Examinations, out of which 2,391 students (43.74%) secured marks between 90% and 99% – an unprecedented achievement.

CMS campuses are among top 10 ISC schools of India, with CMS Gomti Nagar being first

In a national school ranking of all ISC schools of India (based on the number of students of a school scoring 90% or more aggregate mark in 'English plus the best three subjects') in the 2016 ISC board exams, CMS Gomti Nagar I was placed first, i.e. as the very best ISC School in India, with 338 students out of the total 470 ISC examinees obtaining 90% or higher aggregate marks in March 2016. These rankings are published by the portal www.thelearningpoint.net and also printed in the August 2016 issue of the Education World magazine. Thanks to its unique and holistic teaching methodology, CMS has secured top rank in ISC and ICSE board examinations, making Lucknow a hub of 'Quality Education' – a cause for great pride among Lucknowites.

IAS 2015-2016 (Civil Services Examination): 4 CMS former students were selected for the Civil Services of India in 2016, and 11 CMS former students for IAS in 2015.

National Merit Scholarships: 89 CMS students of Class XII won a total of Rs. 3 crore 56 Lakhs in 2016 as Government of India National Merit Scholarships to pursue higher studies in Science. Each of these students will be getting a total of Rs. 400,000/- as merit scholarship (Rs. 80,000/- per year for five years) from the Department of Science and Technology. The Government of India awards this National Merit Scholarship to the top 1% students in the All India ISC Merit List each year, and 89 CMS students were in the top 1% of ISC students in the country as a whole!

National Talent Search (NTS) Scholarship, 2016: Government of India pays for all fees and expenses of the education (upto PhD or professional degree level) of 1000 NTS Scholarship awardees each year. A total of 7 students from Lucknow have been selected for this prestigious scholarship, out of which 3 students belong to CMS alone.

Junior Youth Empowerment Programme (JYEP): Inspired by the international Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Programme, CMS integrated a programme for the empowerment of junior youth into its school curriculum. This programme has provided a unique opportunity to nurture the capacities of literally thousands of youths and junior youths, empowering them to arise and fulfill their potential for initiating individual and social transformation – a kind of education rarely available to youth today. In 2016, the programme reached higher heights of maturity, enhancing young people's powers of expression and developing their ability to work with peers in unity, to think critically, to analyze situations, to make responsible choices, and to engage in acts of service to their communities.

The programme trains volunteer students from the senior section (class 9, 10 and 11) to become 'animators' for the junior youth in their own campus (classes 6, 7 and 8). The JYEP teacher/coordinator of the campus helps each animator to form a group of 12-14 junior youth (JY) and to facilitate the study of the JYEP books and service project with the members of their groups in designated time slots. Bonds of friendship and a group identity are formed as the junior youth and their animator go through this process for three years. An animator described these JYEP books as "exciting and interesting stories that teach virtues such as selfless service, love, family solidarity and hope." Through analysis of these stories, the animators also help the JYs to enhance their moral and intellectual capacity, and give them a platform to express themselves creatively and realize their high sense of purpose.

The component of service projects in JYEP helps students to develop virtues and skills. Animators and junior youth first discuss the issues they see in their schools or communities, and then they decide what kind of feasible service projects they can embark on, to improve the situation.

JYEP is not an extra-curricular activity, being well within the school curriculum and time table, which makes it very inspiring to see how animators and non-animator volunteers are able to balance both their academic lives and service to their fellow school mates. This goes to show that as students, they can live an integrated life- they can balance their spiritual with material life and enhance their intellectual, social, emotional, artistic and moral capabilities.

Discourse on Social Action (DSA): An understanding of the conceptual framework, underlying principles and the learning generated in this process of youth empowerment helps to generate faith in the vision of societal transformation. With the help of facilitators, 400 teachers of senior and junior sections of CMS participated in seminars on the DSA material prepared by FUNDAEC. They consulted on their roles as facilitators of learning and active protagonists of a process of social transformation and contributors to the discourse on social action. It has helped the teachers appreciate the unique opportunity that they have to help their wards realize their true potential in this process.

Moral Education: The Morning Assemblies are a significant regular platform for values inculcation. In 2016, CMS Assemblies have included prayers, 'thought for the day', inspirational songs and stories, and energizers, giving students the opportunity to reflect on ethical concepts and virtues. Values are also 'caught' in the weekly Moral Education classes via co-operative games and co-operative learning. Orientation sessions for new teachers and periodic workshops on the *Pathfinders* and *Hidden Gems* books by experts were organized, to enable teachers to confidently use the methodology for teaching moral education, which is not didactic but encourages analysis and reflection by students.

The CMS Tableau – prepared for the Republic Day parade on 26th January 2017 – was displayed for 8 days at CMS Kanpur Road campus and every CMS student visited it during these days, to learn about its messages – an important plank of the CMS peace education effort. CMS also conducted the World Unity Satsang at its Gomti Nagar I campus every Sunday throughout 2016-17 – indeed, the Satsang has taken place every Sunday since October 2001 without fail.

In 2017-18, the Moral Education programme will pilot-test an exciting new and more comprehensive approach to values education for students of Montessori to class V at two CMS campuses, called the Peace and Value Education programme.

Environment Project: In its drive to enhance the sense of moral purpose of its students in *protecting the environment and sustaining its natural resources*, CMS took multiple approaches to involve young minds in ecological projects in 2016. At the monthly reflection meetings of environment coordinators of all the twenty CMS campuses, students from the campus Eco clubs designed campaigns for including a large number of students and community members in raising awareness. The most outstanding efforts this year have been the students' campaign on addressing Air Pollution and identifying the steps that every citizen can take to effect a positive change, efforts to save both water and electricity, and to engage in proper waste disposal, both within their school campus as well as in the neighbourhood, thereby contributing their share to the national Swachh Bharat campaign. Students made many efforts towards educating families and the wider community on the need for a clean and green Diwali. CMS campuses continued to organise Assembly sessions on environmental issues in 2016, including sharing environmental articles to enhance the consciousness and understanding of students and faculty.

CMS continued its collaboration with the Centre for Environment Education in 2016, both through its Ahmedabad Head Office as well as the Lucknow Regional Office, engaging students regularly in projects on water, biodiversity, tree plantations, organic farming, composting, making herbarium and terrarium, etc. Collaboration with NEDA to save electricity has been another enriching joint project. We also collaborated with Prithvi Innovations to value healthy food habits and to save food.

Various CMS campuses have won outstanding awards in 2016. A documentary film Gauraiya: The Great Indian Sparrow made by students of CMS Mahanagar campus was shortlisted and screened at the prestigious 7th National Science Film Festival in Kolkata in mid February 2017.

Children organized activities on numerous international days in 2016 such as the World Environment Day, World Forestry Day, Earth Day, UN World Water Day, Van Mahotsav and Ground Water Week, World Ozone Day, etc. The International Year of the Pulses was also celebrated in 2016 as a campaign for educating and raising awareness on healthy food habits.

Expanding international opportunities: This year CMS started the new International Cambridge Section from April 2016 in affiliation with the Cambridge International Examinations board to offer the exciting international secondary and higher-secondary educational qualifications (IGCSE and A-Level) to our students. Secondly, it expanded the German language offering at CMS, with the number of students opting for German reaching about 3,500 this year. Thirdly, not only was there an increase in the number of students taking the SAT and Advanced Placement (AP) exams at our SAT exam centre (the only one serving the whole of Uttar Pradesh), but we also gave greater counselling and support to our students for study abroad, through our dedicated Career Counselling cell and our in-campus career counsellors, which has resulted in many admissions offers with scholarships at some of the top universities of the world.

Career Counselling at CMS: In April 2016, the CMS Career Counselling cell organized a Careers Day for the students of Classes IX to XII to expose students to a variety of career options. Eminent persons guided the students. Throughout the year, career counselling sessions were also organized for students at several CMS campuses.

Study abroad counseling: Study Abroad awareness-raising sessions were held in July 2016 at the Meritorious Students' Felicitation Function where representative from different universities guided our students about the opportunities available to them for studying abroad. Counselling sessions were also organized at various CMS campuses throughout the year, with visiting representatives of various universities, including Trinity College Dublin, Ireland; University of Bristol, UK; James Cook University, Singapore; University College London; New York University at Abu Dhabi; Sheffield Hallam University, UK; and advisers from the British Council and from Education USA.

CMS Students Admitted to Top Foreign Universities: A total of 47 CMS students got admissions in universities in the USA, the UK, Canada, Hong Kong, Germany, and Singapore, 28 of them on scholarship, several on 100% scholarship, and a high proportion of them took up their offers, starting their studies abroad in Sept-Oct. 2016. For the 2016-17 batch of class 12 students who applied to universities abroad in the 'early round' by October 2016, 35 students have received admission offers, many with scholarships.

International visits: Approximately 200 CMS students and staff went abroad in 2016 to attend various events, such as the 19th International School Quality Control Convention in Mauritius in July 2016, where the team also met the President, Prime Minister and Chief Justice of the country!; the International Mathematics Competition in Thailand in August 2016 in which 45 students from 7 CMS campuses participated; the International Convention on Quality Control

Circles in August 2016 in Bangkok; the month-long CISV Camps held in Sweden and Canada in July 2016; the International Super Science Fair in Singapore in May 2016; and an educational tour of Finland by Mrs. Susmita Basu, Head of CMS Quality Assurance department in May 2016, to study the Finnish school system that has been ranked among the best in the world for more than a decade. More details are available at www.cmseducation.org/annualreport.

International Video-Conference for dialogue between students: CMS's active presence in the Tony Blair Faith Foundation's (TBFF) "Face to Faith" project was further consolidated during the year. Now known as "Generation Global", the programme is helping students shape their future in a world of relentless change and diversity, giving them the skills and experience they need to navigate difference in a peaceful way. High quality and engaging video conferences and blogging between students and communities marked a further qualitative rise in using technology to build bridges across countries and cultures in 2016. Many CMS students have been immersed in an entirely new experience that allows them to explore, articulate, and develop their own views, while encountering and considering the views of others. By learning about and from one another, students tackle misconceptions and prejudices head on. Students from most of the CMS campuses have participated (several times) this year in meaningful dialogue with their counter parts schools in Australia, Israel, Pakistan, Indonesia, Philippines, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

Sports at CMS: Games and sports are an increasing part of CMS education. CMS campuses have either their own playing field and swimming pool, or easy access to these facilities. Well-trained sports instructors are appointed to nurture the sports talents of the students. There are Astro-turf grounds for team games like hockey and football and facilities for cricket. Training camps for Physical Education Teachers (PETs) and swimming coaches kept them abreast of the latest developments in sports and games.

Significant Co-curricular & Extra-curricular Activities: When defining a school as 'international' the conventional yardstick is whether the school is affiliated to an international exam board, such as the International Baccalaureate or the Cambridge International Examinations Board. Yet there is another, arguably more important, sense in which a school may be international – namely in the extent to which its students have global exposure. While one campus of CMS also became an international school in 2016 in the conventional sense of being affiliated with an international exam board, CMS has for decades been, probably uniquely, an international school of India because of its more than 25 odd international events every year, in which we get the participation of students not only from schools around India but also from many countries of the world. Participation in these events has provided CMS students unparalleled global exposure, expanded their horizons, helped them to pitch their talents against a diverse student body from various Indian states and abroad, and (in some events) the chance to interact with international dignitaries such as serving and retired Presidents, Prime Ministers and Chief Justices of countries, and international celebrities such as the Dalai Lama. These events have provided CMS students the enviable opportunity to present/project themselves on international platforms and thus to develop formidable confidence and poise.

Some significant CMS events were the International Media Conference on Curbing Crimes against Women and the International Interfaith Dialogue Conference, both in August 2016; the International Conference of Chief Justices of the World, in November 2016; and the International Children's Film Festival in April 2016, which screened children's films from 96 countries, was graced by Bollywood film personalities, child stars and celebrities. Over one lakh children of Lucknow from all kinds of schools flocked to watch children's educative

cinema. The reports of these events are all available at the CMS website www.cmseducation.org under 'Events and Conferences'.

A 12-member 'Out of the Blue' (OOTB) singing group of undergraduate students from the University of Oxford came to India to be at CMS during 10-21 July 2016, to run short workshops on 'a cappella' singing at all the CMS campuses over nearly 2 weeks. OOTB stole the hearts of the young and old alike with their wonderful group performances in live concerts held at various campuses.

Community Radio: The CMS Community Radio 90.4 FM provides students the opportunity to make radio programmes and it also serves the local community by broadcasting social and economic development messages on themes such as health, nutrition, education, gender-equality, agricultural productivity, etc.

Conclusion: Our definition of success is anything that expands opportunities or improves outcomes for our students – and this year we have had successes in abundance. We are immensely proud of the variety of ways in which we have been able to bring benefits to our students – whether it be through unique initiatives like the Junior Youth Empowerment Programme, the unrivalled international exposure that we provide, the active promotion of Study Abroad (and career counselling in general), the high-level of teacher training and technology integration, the special programmes like *Out of the Blue* music workshops, or of course the outstanding board exam results achieved. We continue to think big for our students, and our ambition has led to unprecedented achievements in terms of academics, extra-curricular activities, creativity, public service, and the nurturing of pro-unity mindsets. It is amply rewarding and fulfilling for the management and staff of CMS that our students continue to seize the unparalleled opportunities we create for them!

A more comprehensive version of this Report can be read at:
www.cmseducation.org/annualreport

MONA SCHOOL, SATARA - MAHARASHTRA

2017 marked 30 years since Mona School was established. Looking back at the past 3 decades we can see how the school has expanded spiritually & academically.

What differentiates Mona School from other schools is the moral curriculum designed that imparts moral education to the children through moral classes & JYSEP held regularly.

The Junior Youth Spiritual empowerment programme is being implemented at Mona School for 250 students of std. VI to IX during regular school hours. 30 receptive and interested Junior



Youths aged between 13-14 yrs attend the evening Junior Youth session held at school every Tuesday. They will soon complete the series of Junior Youth books & are being trained to serve as animators in the school as well as in their own community. In a recent school exhibition a separate section was allotted to Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Programme. Through their creativity junior youths exhibited various spiritual qualities & aspects that they have learnt. A

presentation on importance of Junior Youth and various acts of service was presented to the visitors. The junior youths had meaningful conversation with the visitors on importance of

Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Programme. The visitors were full of praise for them & one of them recorded in visitor's book the following remark, "JYSEP is a very strong stepping stone for the Youths of today who are going to shape the future of the world. This program builds their moral foundation & acts as a chisel that moulds the diamond."

NEW ERA EMPOWERMENT ACADEMY, CHANDRAWAL, BANTHRA LUCKNOW

New Era Empowerment Academy was established by one of the Bahá'ís of Banthra cluster on 1st July 2016. This is a Bahá'í-inspired School whose purpose is to empower children of the area. The school uses Bahá'í inspired curriculum which includes the Hidden Gems books of BADI Foundation and the lessons of Bahá'í Children Classes. Through these books, the children develop conceptually. The parents of the children have started appreciating the way the school educates the children. One of the parents recently commented that his child is learning a lot of good things and is helping everybody at home. Another parent commented that recently when a child had gone to a relatives house, everybody was amazed by the way the child had learnt and when the relatives asked the child some questions, he was able to answer them with courage and clarity. He said that the relatives were all asking about the school. At present the school has 30 students and is hoping that next year it will be able to triple the number of students.



RUHIYYIH SCHOOL

Ruhiyyih School performed very well academically in 2016. The students of classes X and XII secured excellent results in their ICSE and ISC examinations. The school also expanded its value education programs and organized regular children's classes, junior youth study groups, Ruhi classes and special assemblies for its students. Each special assembly had a unique virtue as its theme, and included programs such as the chanting of prayers, readings from the Holy Writings, the singing of songs and the performance of a skit, and concluded with a short speech by the Principal. A weekly spiritual class was also organized for the teachers of the school.



The school organized successful interactive sessions with parents of students, and also conducted study circles for them for three consecutive days. The school's teachers were trained in advance and helped in conducting these sessions, during which parents were divided into groups and each teacher facilitated a separate group that studied key concepts of Bahá'í education. The parents much appreciated the material which was presented to them and requested the school to conduct more of such gatherings in the future.

One parent approached the school's office after these sessions and offered her house for conducting junior youth classes. Her daughter completed the required Ruhi courses during her summer vacation and started a children's class in her home.

Besides promoting academic education and the spiritual upliftment of its students, the school also participated in various other events throughout the year in and around the school, such as an elocution contest, a volleyball tournament and a football tournament in which the school bagged the 1st prize in entire Darjeeling. The school's annual sports day event was also a great success, which started with the chanting of a Bahá'í Prayer by all the students of the school, and a Nepali cultural dance performance by approximately 90 girls of the school which was appreciated by everyone present.

The school's vision is to give its students spiritual, intellectual and material education and aid them to become agents of change in themselves, in their societies and to contribute to and carry forward an ever-advancing civilization.

SARAMSA BAHÁ'Í SCHOOL

Ridván celebration for the year 2016 was organized by the two clusters, Gangtok and Saramsa. Bahá'í Senior Secondary School, Saramsa hosted the celebration for the 12th day of Ridvan, where children from classes I to VIII participated in various programmes and showcased their talents. Students from Bahá'í School, Tadong also presented a dance. More than 300 guests attended the programme including parents of all children. It was a whole day programme where lunch and snacks were served to all the guests. Everyone appreciated the hard work of the children and hoped to witness more of such programmes in days to come.



The entire teaching staff completed Ruhi book 1 on 25th June which was in collaboration with the teaching staffs of other Bahá'í schools. This course was hosted by Bahá'í School, Tadong and it was a great learning experience for all the teachers.

Before the summer vacation began, students of classes VI, VII and VIII completed Ruhi Book 1 in the school itself, after which 25 of them proceeded to attend the summer campaign. These 25 students completed Book 3 in the campaign and now they run 11 moral classes at their own localities.

Junior Youth Mela and Bal Mela were organized at the school premises on 21st and 28th of October respectively. Children from classes I to VIII participated in the same and showcased their talents through singing and dancing. They shared their experiences of their classes and told everyone as to what changes have they felt in their lives.



The school has moral classes for all the students of classes I to V and IX to XII. They are taught about various virtues and also get to learn songs and prayers. And for the students of classes VI to VIII, JYSEP classes are conducted once every week. The school makes sure that all children

get to learn something or the other when it comes to spiritual education so that they become a better and spiritually strong person in the days to come.

VARQA SCHOOL & JUNIOR COLLEGE

Varqa School was started in the year 1983, a Bahá'í-inspired school at Ahmednagar and is run and managed by Varqa Charitable Institute.

The school runs classes from Nursery to STD XIIth. The school has excelled in academics as well as in extracurricular activities. We have been getting 100% result in standard Xth and XIIth board exams right from its inception.

During the year various activities are conducted for the students to bring out their hidden talent such as

1. Hand writing competition.
2. Debate competition.
3. Drawing competition.
4. Art and craft competition.
5. Salad making competition.
6. Handicraft competition.

A free and compulsory dental check-up of the students of the school was undertaken by a team of doctors. Besides our daily routine we have music, yoga, art & craft to train our children to be mentally and physically fit.

Apart from this we also organise the following,

1. Field visit to Post Office.
2. To teach the students the art of giving and sharing, students right from class Nursery to class XIIth visited various orphanages and donated grains and daily necessities.
3. Birth anniversaries of various great leaders were also celebrated in the school.
4. Maths and Science Exhibition was organised on the district level which was hosted by our school.
5. Tree plantation programmes were organised.

We have the pleasure to state that we conduct moral education for students right from Nursery to Grade XIIth. Bahá'í children's classes (BCC) are conducted from class I to V. JYC is conducted for students from STD V to Xth. These classes are attended by all the students with great enthusiasm. A great emphasis is laid on the holistic development of the students.



BLOSSOMS SCHOOL, BHUBANESWAR

Blossoms School situated in Bharatpur, Bhubaneswar turned 33 this year. It is a Bahá'í inspired school with the motto of EVERY CHILD IS POTENTIALLY THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

Blossoms School aims at releasing the hidden gems from the mines of every individual child. The students as well as the teachers of the school adhere to the core of Bahá'í education. The Bahá'í prayers and holy writings are being chanted at the break of every morning and at the time of departure of the students.

The Bahá'í principles are being formulated in the system of the curricular as well as the co-curricular of Blossoms.

Mothers are being awarded as the first educators of the child and every year they are being acknowledged. The students have developed the spirit of harmony and cooperation as the evil practices of competition has been uprooted from the school for past no. of years.

Peace education is at the core of all learning. All classes have periods dedicated to moral teaching from the Bahá'í inspired material. There are four junior youth groups for the classes from 6 to 9. The junior youth of Blossoms are involved in several service projects such as literacy program for the nearby slum dwellers, cleanliness of the surrounding environment, clothes and blanket distribution to the poor and needy and several other projects.

International Peace Day is being observed every year at Blossoms in the month of September. Last year we had a group of students from Geneva on the International peace day who added to the understanding of concept of oneness of humanity and unity in diversity. They all along with the students of Blossoms School not only celebrated Peace day at school, but also travelled round the city and visited several places of worship of different religions and finally went to the Bahá'í House where the idea of oneness of religions was fully explained to them and they could feel it practically.

The parents of the students also feel proud of having their students in Blossoms where the children not only learn about the virtues and values but also practice them in their day to day activities and have brought changes in their homes as well.

The special children also enjoy an atmosphere of special education at Blossoms as the program of inclusion has been introduced. Almost in every class there is a child with special needs. This not only helps the child to improve but also allows the other students to practice the spirit of kindness and compassion towards differently abled people.

Blossoms pre primary was announced as 2nd rank in the city of Bhubaneswar by the Education World an organization which looks into the parameters of education and development in the



schools in every city of India. This was a point for glory and honour for the management and staff as well as parents and the students of Blossoms.

Now that we have an affiliation to CBSE board by our own credit we look forward to be an outstanding school known for its integrity, honesty and righteousness.

For the coming session as Blossoms is going to have students upto class 10, more number of junior youth groups can be formed and we may proceed with training of animators from among the elder group of the students.

BORNI MEMORIAL ENGLISH SCHOOL

Are the Bahá'í inspired schools the future of learning?

Right!... Bahá'í inspired schools are the pivotal of social transformation. In Pangantabi cluster, **Borni Memorial English School** is shifting its concept of community school; the school has become the centre of learning for social and economic development of the village.

Institutional gatherings, Reflection meetings and youth camps are organized and the school management is involved in the process. The integration of Schools and social development proves that Borni is the centre of learning and teaching is one of the most responsible and important services one can render to society.



Teaching as a service

“To me teaching is an act of service. Therefore, as a teacher I consider myself a servant, a term many of my colleagues feel belittle their profession. I feel as a teacher I have a highly sensitive responsibility to help human beings not only to learn a marketable skill, but more importantly, discover their intelligence and character, strengths and weaknesses. By doing the latter my students become acquainted with who they are and develop an understanding of what they have to do to fulfill their potential and become human beings who have a dynamic understanding of the purpose of life.”

Every individual has been created with special talents, and proper education is the key to the development of these talents. The future of our world depends on how our children are educated, for they will become the adults who tomorrow will contribute their share to the advancement of society for the better future.



“Therefore must be the mentor be a doctor as well: that is, he must, in instructing the child, remedy its faults; must give him learning, and at the same time rear him to have a spiritual nature. Let the teacher be a doctor to the character of the child, thus will he heal the spiritual ailments of the children of men.”

AKANKSHA SCHOOL

Students from standard 11 and 12 have been conducting study circle every Sunday morning. Another class in the evening is being conducted for children by Mr. Ashish Yadav.

In order to train animators for Junior Youth Empowerment Program, an animator course was conducted for 13 youths, out of which 6 youths were able to form their own Junior Youth Groups. The first 3 books in the series have already been studied and the 4th is underway.

Like each year, a children's gathering was organized which was attended by students from 5 other schools.

Every day, a 50-minutes morning assembly is organized by the teachers where Divine Education is imparted to children along with prayers on a regular basis.

As decided by the Local Spiritual Assembly of Yakubpur, 500 trees were planted by the students and teachers.

On Science day, the school bagged the first prize and also won a shield in District Auraiyya.

A well-equipped Library was setup with over 2000 books where students can access information on various subjects.

A conference was organized to share thoughts on women empowerment.

A 2-day deepening session, based on 'Seven Valleys', was organized for all teachers and students of standard 11 & 12.

A competition was organized and themed on Baha'i Holy Writings and Bhagvad Gita.

A Teacher's training was organized for 10 days where Ruhi Book 1, 2 and 3 were studied.



THE COVENANT AND THE HOLY PLACES – VISIT OF MR. JAMSHID AND MRS. SOEKARTINI ARDJOMANDI

We are happy to share that Mr. Jamshid and Mrs. Soekartini Ardjomandi, Bahá'ís of Suriname who have had the inestimable bounty of serving as custodians of various Holy Places at the Bahá'í World Centre offered their precious service to the Indian Bahá'í community. Because of the rich experience that they have had serving as pilgrim guides for over 15 years, they have put together a presentation entitled "The Covenant and the Holy Places" which they have shared with Bahá'ís in a number of countries. While there are a number of believers in India who have been to the Holy Land either as individuals or with their families or on pilgrimage, there are countless others who have not had the bounty of visiting the Bahá'í Holy Places in Israel. It is in this light that the National Assembly accepted their offer of travelling to various places within the country and sharing with members of our community their wonderful presentation through which they are able to offer a glimpse of the wonders of pilgrimage and strengthening their relationship with the Supreme Institution of our Faith, the Universal House of Justice.

At the request of the National Assembly a number of Councils and Local Spiritual Assemblies were able to organize suitable programmes for their communities so that Mr. and Mrs. Ardjomandi could share their illustrated presentation.

Until time of writing of the report some 30 presentations have been made excluding Andamans & Nicobar Islands where the Ardjomandis are spending 10 days. They have been able to share their presentation with Bahá'í communities of Delhi (5 programmes during ten days of their stay), Rajasthan (Jagatpur Centre of Intense Activity, Jaipur, Shivdaspura Cluster, Chaksu cluster, Todabhim cluster & Jodhpur Cluster), Punjab (Chandigarh), Madhya Pradesh (Indore, Bhopal & Gwalior), Maharashtra (Mumbai, Pune, Panchgani, Nashik, Malegaon), Karnataka (Bangalore, Mandya & Mysore), Tamil Nadu (Sivakasi, Chennai, Kanchipuram & Puducherry), and Kerala (Palakkad Cluster, Kannur Cluster, Trivandrum, North Paravoor). Plans have been made for Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Odisha.



RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY DELEGATES AT NATIONAL CONVENTION 2016-2017

During the deliberations at various sessions of the Annual Convention held on 29, 30 April & 1 May a total of 81 suggestions and one recommendation were received. The recommendation and ten of the suggestions were taken up by the National Assembly in its August 2016 Meeting and rest were taken up in the current meeting. The decision of the National Assembly are noted in italics; for the sake of completeness the suggestions and the decisions made that were taken up in August 2016 meeting are reproduced here.

1. Recommendation of the National Convention: Along with the printed version of the Annual Report of the National Spiritual Assembly there should be a video / audio presentation capturing the spiritual of services by believers and institutions in the country for distribution to the delegates as well as the wider community.

The following suggestions that were offered by delegates at the National Convention 2016-2017 were considered by the National Spiritual Assembly.

Response: It was decided to identify a few people in the country who can help us with collecting video clippings and photographs for the making of video presentation that can go with the annual report. It was decided to request the Councils to also help us have the video recording of the important events in their states.

Suggestions made by individual delegates or compiled by them from their respective communities:-

I. National Spiritual Assembly:

Related to expansion and consolidation:

1. It was brought to the attention of the National Spiritual Assembly that attendance in the meetings of the Regional Bahá'í Council of Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh is between 5 and 6 members only. It is a matter of great concern. The National Spiritual Assembly should intervene in this matter and provide necessary guidance to the Council. Poor attendance in the meetings of Regional Bahá'í i Councils affects the progress of the Faith in the region.

Response: The National Assembly would monitor the attendance of the members of the Council and if necessary, bring the matter to the notice of the members of the Council. The attendance list could be used for the appointment of the Councils and those who have been absent frequently may not be reappointed. The Office of Communication and Records could be requested to prepare the report quarterly.

2. Delhi Cluster has 1048 activities; it will be good if this report is shared with all the Councils and major Local Spiritual Assemblies.

Response: It was decided to request Dr. Merchant to prepare a brief version of this report and share it with the National Assembly. After the National Assembly studies the report, it will be shared with the other institutions in the country.

3. In the last five years, most of the goals were achieved through individual initiatives. We don't have dynamic communities. National Spiritual Assembly should have plans to strengthen Local Spiritual Assemblies and communities. They do everything, but very little attention is given to building dynamic communities.

Response: The National Assembly is aware of this need and is thinking of measures to remedy the situation.

4. We should speak more about the process. Numbers are easy to understand but to understand the growth process is difficult. It would be better if some qualitative notes as to how we have reached to those numbers and stories of learning are included in the reports.

Response: Noted, it is a good suggestion, efforts will be made to action it.

5. The youth in the age group of 21 to 30 should be given proper accompaniment. Prepare a list of youth who are of the age group of 15 to 20 and youth who are of 21 to 30 age group should share their experiences on various aspects including choosing a profession etc.

Response: The youth in the age group of 21 to 30 should be provided with proper accompaniment: It was decided to consult with the Counselors on this subject.

6. The National Secretary should communicate with all the Council Secretaries every month (not through mail) and also similar communication network has to be established with all the Council Treasurers.

Response: The National Secretary was requested to communicate with all the Council Secretaries every month. The Secretary is trying to do that.

7. One of the issues of Bahá'í *Samachar* used to be produced in four colour and very attractive. This should be continued. It is also better if some deepening subjects, such as Bahá'í burial, writing a Will, etc, are included in it.

Response: Accepted and as and when possible, efforts will be made to include articles on such specific subjects.

8. Movement of believers should immediately be effected in the Statistical Report Program and then the updated list provided to the concerned communities.

Response: Accepted. Department of Statistics will look into it.

9. There should be a serious review of decentralization in clusters in Delhi cluster suggests that large numbers attend in Baha'i Holy Day celebrations, but in the process of elections the participation is too less.

Response: Attention to this limitation is being given to raise consciousness of the believers about participation in process of election.

10. Is it possible for the National Spiritual Assembly to come out with a letter during the Birth Anniversaries mentioning all success stories that we will have achieved in the first six cycles of the new Plan?

Response: Good suggestion. The National Assembly will look into such possibility.

Related to Bahá'í Properties:

11. There are 500 activities in Bidhuna and surrounding areas. For these activities we have to use schools or other government places. We need our own place for activities and meetings. There is a plot in Kanpur which can be developed and used for activities.

Response: Let that proposal be considered first by the Regional Council of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, & Delhi.

12. National Spiritual Assembly to consider buying bigger land for the Bihar Sharif Temple.

Response: All efforts are being done.

13. There is one committee for property and other for asset management.

Response: Their functions are overlapping. It is not so.

14. There are many properties which are not currently being used or plan to be used in the near future. If we sell at least two of them and buy a plot in Delhi and build a hostel for the staffs serving at the National Baha'i Centre, it will be very good.

Response: At present the National Assembly has decided to take on rent some Flats whenever such need arises. 15. Professional guidance for property usage may be sought as the National Spiritual Assembly is fully depending on the Property committee only.

Response: Not practical.

Related to Bahá'í funds:

16. Treasurer should come with a plan to make the process easy so that everyone is able to contribute. Only less than 2% of the population in Statistical Report Program is contributing.

Response: All out efforts are being made and almost all Councils are undertaking Fund Education.

II. State/Regional Bahá'í Councils in India:

1. Along with the printed version of the Annual Report of the National Spiritual Assembly, there should be a video / audio presentation capturing the spiritual of services by believers and institutions in the country for distribution to the delegates as well as the wider community.

Response: The Councils should be requested to assist in identifying a few people in the country who can help with collecting video clippings and photographs of the important events in your states for the making of a video presentation that can go with the annual report.

2. It was suggested that every Local Spiritual Assembly should be registered.

Response: The Councils should be advised that the National Assembly feels that not all the Local Assemblies may be registered, but those in urban areas that are active, have property, Bahá'í cemetery, etc need to get themselves registered.

3. There are many activities carried out by the Bahá'í community, but very few enrollments.

Response: The Bahá'í institutions across the country should be encouraged to make efforts to increase enrollments in the next cycle.

4. The National Spiritual Assembly to appoint a national youth committee. This committee will target only colleges and should try to reach out to at least ten thousand college students this year.

Response: It should be conveyed to the Councils that the National Assembly feels that this is not feasible. However, they should also be requested to encourage college and university teachings and be advised to have college and university teaching activities during the teaching phase of every Cycle.

5. The youth in the age group of 21 to 30 should be given proper accompaniment.

Response: The Councils should be requested to prepare a list of youth who are of the age group of 15 to 20 and youth who are of 21 to 30 age group and they should share their experiences on various aspects including choosing a profession etc.

6. Most activities are in villages. People migrate to cities and we lose their contacts. Regional Bahá'í Councils should maintain a register of the movement of believers.

Response: This suggestion should be shared with the Councils and they should also be advised to make every effort to implement the same.

7. One of the issues of Bahá'í Samachar used to be produced in four colour and very attractive. This should be continued. It is also better if some deepening subjects such as Bahá'í burial, wiring a Will, etc, are included in it.

Response: It should be conveyed to the Councils that this suggestion has been accepted by the National Assembly and as and when possible, efforts will be made to include articles on such specific subjects.

8. Use of arts in teaching is not very strong in India. We have not developed this strategy in India. This is the most effective way of teaching and success is achieved in short time. We have not used our resources effectively. For example, watching a documentary or something like that of ten to fifteen minutes can produce better result than years of teaching efforts. It is time for the National Spiritual Assembly to appoint a special committee for this purpose.

Response: The Councils should be encouraged to make efforts to implement the above suggestion for their state/region first.

9. All Local Assemblies should acquire land for Gulistan.

Response: The Councils should be encouraged at least major Local Assemblies in your state/region to try to get land for a Bahá'í Gulistan.

10. To appoint a kind of advisory committee for funds representing various successful states, such as Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Tripura.

Response: It should be conveyed to the Councils that they are free to send in suggestions.

11. Organize two or three fund conferences at the national level. The purpose of this conference should be to educate large number of believers on the importance of contributing regularly to the Bahá'í funds. To include Fund Education subject in almost all the National and zonal level functions.

Response: The Councils should be advised to ensure that increasing attention is being paid in this respect.

12. There is training for almost all other activities, but no specific training on fund. Believers have lot of questions about fund in their minds. If we take some steps towards this, the number of contributors will increase.

Response: The Councils are organizing such training programmes.

13. In future, use more graphs instead of number. Like to know the details of earmarked funds we well.

Response: It should be conveyed to the Councils that the National Assembly has noted the above suggestion.

14. The National Assembly should organize a national gathering of Treasurers of State/Regional Bahá'í Councils in India. Frequency of communication and awareness should be increased.

Response: It should be conveyed to the Councils that this is being done regularly.

15. The practice of using coupons should continue and Assemblies should be asked to contribute certain number of units. Coupons may be printed for specific requirements, such as Temple Fund.

Response: It should be conveyed to the Councils that experience has shown that keeping the track of collection of the funds through sale of coupons has been a challenging task.

16. Earlier we used to have session on Huqúqu'lláh. More than 50% delegates are new. It would be good if the subject is included in the program.

Response: The National Assembly has noted the above and should convey to the Councils that special gatherings for this subject are being held in the country. Convention programme leaves very little time to undertake such subjects for deepening/discussion.

17. National Assembly should open a direct bank account and share its details with individuals so that they can send their contribution directly. The sender after transferring the amount, then sends a message so that the National Assembly knows who the sender is.

Response: It should be conveyed to the Councils that this has been principally approved by the National Assembly. Separate bank account for this purpose is designated. This now needs to be given publicity.

18. Instead of requesting individuals to contribute towards units, we should print coupons.

Response: The National Assembly learnt from past experience that coupons are not found practical in collecting the funds.

19. Delegates should have contact details of all delegates and members of the National Assembly so that when necessary they can immediately contact them. It would be better if information on group pilgrimages, which are taking place in an increasing number in India, is also included in the annual report. Also, stories from more Bahá'í inspired schools should be included.

Response: This has been noted by the National Assembly and efforts will be taken to report such activities.

20. There are several trees in the Temple garden which are dying. We should plan to plant more trees.

Response: This has been forwarded to the Temple committee.

21. At the Temple, there weren't enough volunteers. Institutions need to think about it. The budgeted amount for volunteers is less. Also some hi-tech arrangements should be made, such as proper welcoming messages and videos sharing the purpose of the Temple. Same is the case with the Information Centre.

Response: This has been forwarded to the Temple committee to look into such issues. The National Assembly is already consulting with the Temple Committee on this issue of declining number of volunteers.

22. If National Spiritual Assembly develops some Apps (for smartphones, etc), so that information can reach us frequently.

Response: The National Assembly feels that this is not necessary at this juncture.

23. Suggestion to the BPT is that the dates mentioned in the prayer books should be according to the new Bahá'í Calendar.

Response: The above suggestion has been accepted by the National Assembly.

24. We need to educate our youth to have their marriages according to the Bahá'í rites.

Response: The National Assembly's Nineteen Day Feast Letter has covered such subjects for educating the believers.

25. There are several youth serving in institutions and want to start some community activities such as community schools. They wish to get training from Barli Institute or New Era Teacher Training Centre, but don't have sufficient financial capacity. How can we help them?

Response: The Councils should be advised to assist the youth who are seeking guidance to you when they approach. They should seek guidance through their respective Councils.

26. The last day of Ridvan Festivals coincides with the last day of the National Convention. It would better if this could be changed so that the friends can attend the celebrations of Ridvan Festival.

Response: National Convention is normally held on the week end for better attendance .

27. There should be more literature festivals to popularize Bahá'í literature as is being done by outside world. Individual believers should be encouraged to write articles in their regional languages.

Response: The Councils are encouraged to do the needful with respect to the above suggestion.

28. Can we set up a Bahá'í radio or television station so that news and information can be spread rapidly and widely?

Response: Efforts have been made in the past and the National Assembly feels that at present this is not practical.

29. A caption of the photographs and photos of departed Baha'is should be included in the annual report.

Response: This suggestion has been accepted by the National Assembly. 30. Allocate more time for general discussion. Delegates have two roles – to vote and to give suggestions, therefore, need more time. Do not wait till the next Convention to respond to these suggestions. Replies may be conveyed as soon as they are taken.

Response: This has been noted by the National Assembly.

31. National Spiritual Assembly can hold their meetings in different states so that each state may be benefitted.

Response: Although this is always not possible, however, in the spirit of the suggestion, efforts will be made to hold NSA meeting at least 2/3 time outside Delhi.

32. Appreciations for the dignified, attractive, detailed Annual Report for the 2016 Convention: (a) Captions (Short note) to the pictures are necessary to all of them so that the reader can easily recognize. Accepted (b) It may be good to print photos of the departed.

Response: This has been accepted by the National Assembly.

33. Report book is very useful to each of the councils, so please do send copies to them.

Response: This will be done.

34. National 19 day feast letter may be modified with latest Baha'i news, print photos and make hard copies to send all major Assemblies of India.

Response: The Nineteen Day Feast Letter has different purpose. It is not a newsletter but a letter from the National Assembly to the community.

35. Allot more time for general suggestions, which is the 2nd only responsibility of a delegate.

Response: Efforts are always made in this regard.

36. Please do not wait till next year Convention for the National Assembly's decisions on the suggestion. Kindly sent reply after the 1st meeting of National Assembly and share to the delegates.

Response: The National Assembly will try to discuss as early as possible.

37. Collect the mail Ids and phone numbers of all the delegates & kindly give it to them (delegates).

Response: The National Assembly feels that the above suggestion is not acceptable.

38. Do something to avail a plot for Gulistan in each state.

Response: The Councils should be encouraged to make every effort to acquire land for Bahá'í Gulistan in your state/region.

39. Deepening classes are very much needed in grass root level to get deep knowledge about the various subjects to the believers, other than Ruhi Books.

Response: Councils should be encouraged to make every effort to organize such deepening classes in your state/region.

40. The Station of Baha, The Bab and the unique personality of Abdul Baha are to be explained to the Bahá'ís with the help of learneds of Al Baha (Appointed Institutions)

Response: The National Assembly feels that this is a good suggestion and the Auxiliary Board members in your state/region can hold the classes as and when possible.

41. Utilize the exceptional ability and spirit of the special eminent Baha'i like Mr. Afshin, to all over India.

Response: This is being done.

42. Request to the Counsellors that Auxiliary Board Members and their Assistants are to be activated like before.

Response: In this Five Year Plan focus on developing the capacity of Assistants to the Auxiliary Board members is being given.

43. Kindly give suggestions to the Universal House of Justice that Major Councils of India get permission election and count their ballots by themselves with the help of Counsellors and their deputies.

Response: The National Assembly feels that this is not acceptable.

44. Request to keep National Assembly meeting in different states so that will get good opportunity to consult and encourage Councils to implement next one year goals of the Five Year Plan to march towards second mile stones.

Response: Efforts will be made to hold at least 2-3 meetings of NSA outside Delhi.

45. Arrange two general conferences in a year one for south and another for north states of India and invite representation of the Supreme body in each occasions.

Response: A number of consultative conferences are being organized every year.

46. Deficits in the Temple Fund to make up for the shortfall, all the states may be given a goal as per their financial capacity.

Response: It is not acceptable as contribution to the Bahá'í Fund is purely voluntary. Only general appeals can be made drawing attention to the deficit in the Temple Fund.

47. It will be good to request Councils by National Assembly to advise Cluster Committees to have reflection meetings on every last Sunday, so that their love, fellowship and Bahá'í spirit will be build up.

Response: The National Assembly should convey to the Councils that each Council should have freedom to decide date/venue and frequency of meeting.

48. Literacy program for The Most Holy Book-*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, through learning camps etc. To help friends get a better knowledge of the Laws of our beloved Faith.

Response: Councils should be highly encouraged to explore the possibility of organizing such literacy programs and this can be follow up with communities in their state/region.

49. To have numerous youth activities throughout the year and consult on how to achieve our goals through logistics and planning.

Response: Councils should be advised and encouraged to increase the involvement of youths in reflection meetings to be encouraged.

50. Translation of more and more Bahá'í publications in the local language to help Bahá'í pioneers to teach the Faith effectively.

Response: Respective Councils should be encouraged to undertake the translation into their regional languages.

51. Methods to follow up on youth conferences and camps – e.g. Home Visits.

Response: This is being done.

52. To convert a number of Bahá'í prayers in a standard tune or song.

Response: Every Council should be encouraged to take up this job as per the talent available in their state/region.

53. A humble request to RBC's to translate Newsletters into the local language of each state.

Response: Councils are requested to ensure that the required translation is undertaken.

54. A kind request to the National Assembly to send members/ representatives to encourage and monitor the progress of different communities.(Also suggested by the Kolhapur Community during their Feast which was attended by one of the NSA members).

Response: NSA members generally attend planning and zonal conferences. Sometimes NSA as a body depute specific member on its behalf to attend special functions. 55. To coordinate with various Local Spiritual Assemblies to organize a vocational activity for women and youth for a period of 3 months each year.

Response: Councils and the Local Spiritual Assemblies should be advised to see the practicability of the above suggestion.

56. Request to hold a family conference each year to encourage Bahá'í family life and share their teaching experiences.

Response: The National Assembly feels that the above is a good suggestion and therefore the Councils in India should be encouraged to see the possibility of holding such a conference.

57. To hold a national level conference for coordinators for sharing experiences.

Response: Such conferences are regularly held.

58. To appoint a task force to make use of Fine Arts like Drama, Music, Dance, and other skills, for the promotion of The Faith.

Response: Councils should be advised to identify State/regional groups of individuals in your state/region who are equipped with the above mentioned talents.

59. Use of Media for informing the general public about the Socio Economic Programs & activities of the Bahá'ís.

Response: This year special efforts will be done to make general public aware about socioeconomic programmes and Bahá'í activities with an emphasis on bicentenary celebration of birthday of Baha'u'llah.

60. To encourage friends to start more Bahá'í schools.

Response: Individuals interested should get in touch with the New Era Teacher Training Centre (NETTC) and Society of Universal Learner (SOUL).

61. Request the National Assembly to encourage communities to send volunteers to serve at the Temple.

Response: The drive for recruitment of volunteers for Temple will be intensified and this should be forwarded to the Temple committee.

62. Request the National Assembly to have a Bahá'í Matrimonial site to encourage the youth to find Baha'i partners and marry according to Bahá'í marriage laws.

Response: This suggestion was not accepted.

63. Audio visual CD's on Bahá'í prayers, stories and films to be produced in different languages and provided to all Local Assemblies in India.

Response: Respective Councils should be encouraged to undertake the task.

64. The National Assembly may encourage visits to The Lotus Temple by groups from various clusters in order to facilitate group visits. The NSA may help in arranging food and stay at reasonable cost.

Response: If such group wants to visit temple, local assistance in organizing for them lodging and boarding at their expenses can be provided.

65. The National Assembly may write a message of inspiration & encouragement to the Bahá'í youth in India.

Response: This is being done time and again through the newsletter.

66. To use the Bahá'í Temple popularity to spread the Bahá'í message & unity in the following ways:

- a) A proper video of Baha'i Temple prayers & give to various TV channels.
- b) Give audio recording of Temple prayers to Doordarshan.
- c) Upload on the internet in large nos.

Response: The Office of Public Affairs should be advised to look into this suggestion.

III. The Temple Committee:

1. There are several trees in the Temple garden which are dying.

Response: We should plan to plant more trees. This suggestions should be forwarded to the Temple Committee.

2. At the Temple, there weren't enough volunteers. We need to think about it. The budgeted amount for volunteers is less. Also some hi-tech arrangements should be made, such as proper

welcoming messages and videos sharing the purpose of the Temple. Same thing is with the Information Centre.

Response: This should be forwarded to Temple committee to look into such issues and also the National Assembly to consult with the Temple Committee on this issue of declining number of volunteers.

3. The drive for recruitment of volunteers for Temple will be intensified.

Response: This should be forwarded to the Temple Committee.

Suggestions Related to Teaching & Administration:

1. Attendance in the meetings of Regional Baha'i Council in our region is between 5 and 6 only.

2. It is a matter of great concern. The National Spiritual Assembly should intervene in this issue and provide necessary guidance to the Council. Poor attendance in the meetings of Regional Baha'i Council affects the progress of the Faith in the region.

3. Every Local Assembly should be registered.

4. Delhi cluster has 1048 activities; it will be good if this report is shared with all the Councils and major Local Spiritual Assemblies.

5. Last five years, most of the goals were achieved through individual initiatives. We don't have dynamic communities. National Spiritual Assembly should have plans to strengthen Local Spiritual Assemblies and communities. They do everything, but no attention given towards building dynamic communities.

6. There is large number of activities going on, but no enrollments. Institutions should be encouraged to increase enrollments in the next cycle.

7. We should speak more about the process. Numbers are easy to understand but to understand process is difficult. It would be better if some qualitative notes as on how we have reached to those numbers and stories of learning are included in the reports.

8. The National Spiritual Assembly to appoint a national youth committee. This committee will target only colleges and should try to reach out to at least ten thousand college students this year.

9. The youth in the age group of 21 to 30 should be given proper accompaniment. Prepare a list of youth who are of the age group of 15 to 20 and youths who are of 21 to 30 age group should share their experiences on various aspects including choosing a profession etc.

The National Secretary should communicate with all the Council Secretaries every month (not through mail) and also similar communication network has to be established with all the Council Treasurers.

FORTRESS FOR WELL-BEING – BAHÁ'Í MARRIAGES

The following friends were married during the year. May they have every happiness and joy.



Sagar Pratap and Suman More
were married in Bhopal, 28 April 2016



Monu Kumar and Khushboo
were married in Bihar, 9 May 2016



Sangeeta C Mahla and Kamallesh R Bahul
were married in Gujarat, 30 May 2016



Ratilal S Bagul and Ravina S Chourya
were married in Gujarat, 2 June 2016



Haresh R Khurkutiya and Manita R Pawar
were married in Gujarat, 4 June 2015



Subrat Nayak and Nitumani
were married in Assam, 5 June 2016



Mahesh R Gavit and Ramila S Bhoje
were married in Gujarat, 6 June 2016



Tejal S Gavit and Dinesh Padvi
were married in Gujarat, 12 June 2016



Sundaramoorthy and Malliga
were married in Tamil Nadu, 4 September 2016



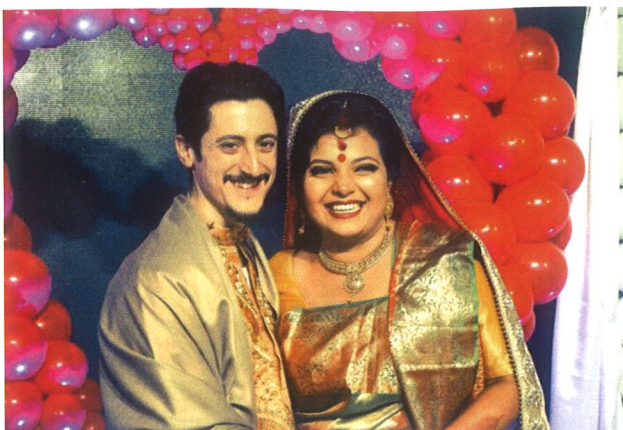
Shraddha Teli and Pratheesh Prabhakaran
were married in Mumbai, 19 September 2016



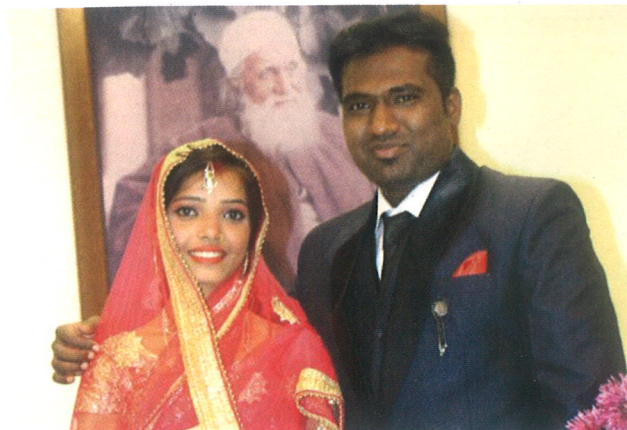
Jagruti Ahir and Asif Ahmed Khan
were married in Gujarat, 6 November 2016



Kumar Agnivesh and Meenu Meenakshi
were married in Bihar, 28 November 2016



Richard Stollar and Tuhina Gupta
were married in Uttar Pradesh, 10 December 2016



Rekha and Yogesh Shitole
were married in Delhi, 16 January 2016



Kalaivani and Gopal
were married in Puducherry, 22 January 2016



Aruljothi and Arulmurugan
were married in Tamil Nadu, 1 February 2016



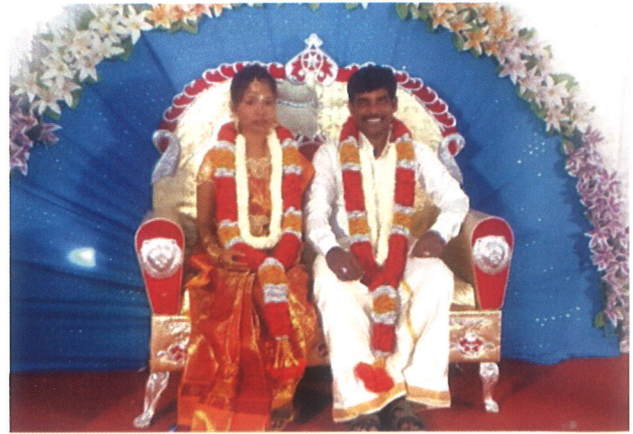
Premkumar and Sivaranjini
were married in Tamil Nadu, 6 February 2016



Elavarasi and Ramkumar
were married in Puducherry, 9 February 2016



Kongkham Bhumeshwor Singh
and Soibam Nuri Devi
were married in Manipur, 13 February 2017



Ruganapriya and Rajkumar
were married in Tamil Nadu, 16 February 2017



Khushboo Pandey and Nitish Pandey
were married in Bihar, 4 March 2017

IN MEMORIAM

"But as he has been freed from this sorrow-stricken shelter and has turned his face toward the everlasting nest of the Kingdom and has been delivered from a dark and narrow world and has hastened to the sanctified realm of Light, therein lies the consolation of our hearts".

('Abdu'l-Bahá)

The following believers from India passed on to the Abhá Kingdom.



1. Mr. M. K. Sipani, 3 June 2016 (Ajmer)
2. Dr. Debendernath Adhya, 5 July 2016 (Gurgaon)
3. Mr. Suhash Chandekar, 23 August 2016 (Maharashtra)
4. Mr. K. C. Gupta, 19 November 2016 (Ajmer)
5. Mr. R. Durgaiyah, 28 December 2016 (Andhra Pradesh)
6. Mr. Rambahadur Singh Dinkar, 28 January 2017 (Bihar)
7. Colonel Manodhir Chowdhuria, 31 March 2017 (Shillong)
